THE BEGINNINGS OF BRITISH RULE IN UPPER BURMA: A STUDY OF BRITISH POLICY AND BURMESE REACTION - 1885-1890

by

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ABSTRACT

This Thesis attempts to study the painstaking efforts made by the British to 'pacify' Upper Burma during the first five years of conquest (November 1885-December 1890) as well as the nature of Burmese unrest engendered by those efforts.

While Chapter One is a brief account of the historical background to the conquest of Upper Burma, Chapter Two deals with the course of events from 28 November 1885 to 15 December 1885, when the country was under a purely military rule, with special reference to the root causes of Burmese unrest which grew following King Thibaw's deportation.

Chapter Three is devoted to British policy from 15 December 1885 to November 1886, when efforts, essentially conciliatory in nature, were made to build up a civil administration. These efforts having failed, military operations were undertaken from November 1886 to April 1887. Chapter Four is devoted to these operations.

But these operations failed to produce the desired effects. So a new policy was formulated - that of dealing with the people by villages through a punitive village regulation. Chapter Five deals with the framing of this regulation from about the middle to the end of 1887, and Chapter Six with its operation from 1888 to 1890.

ABBREVIATIONS

ARB	Administration Report of Burma.
BFMP	Burma Foreign and Military Proceedings.
BFP	Burma Foreign Proceedings.
BHP	Burma Home Proceedings.
BMP	Burma Military Proceedings.
BPWP	Burma Public Works Proceedings.
BRAP	Burma Revenue and Agriculture Proceedings.
DP	Dufferin Papers.
GSWP	George Stuart White Papers
HC	Home Correspondence
HTWP	Herbert Thirkell White Papers
IMP	India Military Proceedings.
IUBP	India Upper Burma Proceedings.
JBRS	Journal of the Burma Research Society.
JLEI	Judicial Letters and Enclosures from India.
LP	Lansdowne Papers.
MDI	Military Despatches to India.
MLEI	Military Letters and Enclosures from India.
MMLD	Military and Marine Letters and Despatches from India.
PGLIB	Public and General Letters from India and Bengal.
PSCI	Political and Secret Correspondence with India.
RPAB	Report on the Police Administration of Burma.
RTLI	Railway and Telegraph Letters from India.
SC	Sladen Collection.
SR	Settlement Report.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The present study deals with the so-called 'pacification'[1] of 'Upper Burma proper' from the end of the Third Anglo-Burmese War in November 1885 to the end of Sir Charles Crosthwaite's tenure of office as Chief Commissioner of Burma in December 1890. 'Upper Burma proper', as distinguished from the vast Shan plateau in the east and south-east, and the mountainous areas of the Kachins and Chins in the north and west, comprised, broadly speaking, the plains of the valleys of the rivers Irrawaddy, Sittang and Chindwin and certain highland areas on the peripheries of these plains. The Shan plateau and the Kachin and Chin areas do not come under the scope of this study.

In fact, during the whole period under review the British policy was to concentrate on the plains. Of course, at intervals, operations were conducted in the tribal areas, when it was found that some fugitive leaders from the plains were trying to form new pockets of resistance with the help of the tribesmen. But these operations were not a part of the main programme of pacification. The idea was that once the plains were under control the subjugation of the tribal areas would be only a question of time.

While the thesis is an account of painstaking British efforts to establish their rule over a conquered people, it also attempts to bring into focus the exact nature of the resistance engendered by these efforts and other factors. Here in Upper Burma the British were

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[1] In the present study the word 'pacification' has been used to mean the establishment of British rule in Upper Burma by various conciliatory and coercive measures.

face to face with a people who, ethnically homogeneous as they were, were extremely proud of their culture, tradition and national identity, and who were determined to fight to the last to save these precious things. This is why the work of 'pacification' eventually turned out to be one of the most formidable tasks the British ever performed in their colonial history.

But the contemporary critics[2] do not appear to have appreciated the exact nature of this task. Perhaps they thought that the pacification of a 'semi-barbarous' country like Upper Burma with some ten thousand well-trained and well-equipped British troops was as simple as quelling an ordinary rebellion. So, when after a few months of the occupation of Mandalay more troops became necessary to cope with a rapidly deteriorating situation, these critics made a slashing attack upon the Government of India, thus in effect questioning the ability of the men who were engaged in the work of pacification.

So, to determine the exact nature of the work of pacification, the present study lays emphasis on certain basic aspects, namely, the problem which necessitated the Third Anglo-Burmese War, the causes of the resistance which grew following the War, the nature of the resistance, and the character of the policy which the British pursued from time to time to quell the resistance.

The problem which necessitated the War was the growing French influence at the Court of Mandalay. There are, however, several other things which come up in connection with the British intervention, such as the alleged massacres in the Mandalay Palace and the Mandalay

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[2]Certain opposition members in the British Parliament.

Jail, the maltreatment of certain British subjects, the assault on several British river steamers, and the alleged mishandling of the affair of a British firm known as the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation. But none of these appears to have afforded sufficient warrant for armed intervention. There was also a certain commercial motive involved, namely, the desire to establish commercial links with South-West China through Bhamo. But the Authorities knew that the war against Thibaw would have been an unjustifiable war if it was undertaken only for the purpose of extending trade. In fact, if none of these factors existed, the war would have nevertheless come because of the growing French influence at the Court of Mandalay. France, firmly established in the valley of the river Mekong, was trying to gain a permanent foot-hold in the Upper Valley of the river Irrawaddy. This was a serious threat to the British position in the East in respect of the security of the Indian North-Eastern Frontier, the lucrative trade with Upper Burma and the expected trade with South-West China through Bhamo. So the British moved in and occupied Mandalay after a war of two weeks (14-28 November 1885). The French gave in. But their hopes of a greater Indo-Chinese Empire did not fade away altogether; these lingered on for another three or four years as the British became involved deeper and deeper in the massive work of pacification. This partly explains why during the whole period under review the British attitude to the problem of pacification was marked by an exceptionally high degree of determination and stubbornness.

As to the causes of resistance, the officials in charge of 'pacification', having mentioned the existence of a certain sentimental reverence in the people for the royal family, attributed the

unrest chiefly to certain 'predatory instincts ' of Burmese character. Although some contemporary observers noted an element of restlessness in the Burmese character, this could hardly be the basic cause of a resistance movement which resulted in the employment of some forty thousand troops and police and not less than six thousand casualties. The real causes of the unrest are to be found in the injured national and religious sentiments of the people and in the economic disasters caused by war, depredations, bad harvests, and cattle disease. The people, both the monks and the laity, resented the deportation of the King[3] who, they believed, was the Defender of the Faith and the symbol of national unity. Their resentment grew stronger as the economic situation became more and more desperate. It is interesting to note that during all the troubled years of pacification the Burmese people attributed their sufferings primarily to the entry of a non-Buddhist Power. This is why their stand was decidedly anti-British.

So the resistance movement was, on the whole, popular. There was, of course, a great deal of dacoity and robbery, as might have happened anywhere in the world in a similar situation. But the movement did not lose its patriotic and ideological character. For this a large amount of credit goes to some of the leaders of the resistance, whose sincerity, perseverence, boldness and tactfulness kept the movement alive in spite of tremendous pressure from the British side.

Indeed, the task of pacification was a Herculean one. The authorities, both civil and military, did all that was possible under the circumstances. The civil administration, headed by Sir Charles

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[3]King Thibaw was deported immediately after the occupation of Mandalay.

Bernard (15 December 1885 to 28 February 1887) and Sir Charles Crosthwaite (28 February 1887 to 10 December 1890), tried every possible method until the true panacea was found in the Village Regulation of 1887 with its punitive provisions. The military also did its part remarkably well. Day after day and night after night, the soldiers forced their way through dense jungle and malarial swamps, enduring fatigue and all sorts of odds and inconveniences with a cheerful and soldierlike spirit. There were, however, certain blunders made during the early months of occupation, which to a great extent aggravated the situation. But, considering the nature of the resistance and the natural disadvantages under which the officers and men worked, the task of pacification could not have been accomplished without a heavy price.

Such are the main points on which the present study is based. No scholarly investigation of the subject has previously been made on these lines. The earliest full-length work on the subject is The Pacification of Burma (1912) by Sir Charles Crosthwaite himself. This is an excellent account of various measures and military operations associated mainly with Crosthwaite's own period of office. These measures and operations tally, in most parts, with the official records. But the book, which devotes very little space to Sir Charles Bernard's administration, neither refers to any of the early blunders nor says anything about the causes and nature of the resistance, save a passing reference to a pongyi bo[4] in whom the author observed a certain 'fanatical or patriotic' spirit.

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[4] Pongyi bo = monk leader.

There are three modern works which should also be mentioned. These are: Administration of Burma (1938) by Ma Mya Sein, The Making of Burma (1962) by Dorothy Woodman and British Administration in Upper Burma, 1885-1897 (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, 1963) by Jagjit Singh Sidhu. Ma Mya Sein's book deals mainly with the administrative aspects of Burma under the Kings as well as under the British following the annexation of Upper Burma. So far as the pacification is concerned, the most important aspect of the book is its account of the village organisation which throws some light on the traditional pattern of leadership in the community.

Dorothy Woodman, having discussed at great length the circumstances which led to the First, Second and Third Anglo-Burmese Wars, passes on to the topic of resistance in Upper Burma. But the chapter on resistance appears to be somewhat misleading. The title of the chapter is 'Resistance in Upper Burma'. But it is entirely devoted to the resistance offered by the Chins and Kachins and to the affairs of the Shan States; it hardly speaks of what happened in the plains. However, Woodman's narrative of tribal resistance is very informative.

Jagjit Singh Sidhu's thesis is the only modern work devoted completely to the subject. But the work, which is a good account of British policy, hardly touches the Burmese side of the picture. The author attributes the unrest to certain existing forces of disorder such as the habit of desultory fighting and the traditional outstanding feuds between neighbouring villages. There is, of course, some truth in it. As happens everywhere, when the authority of the local officials is momentarily paralysed or much weakened

following a war of annexation the lawless spirit in the country concerned finds in it a proper channel to assert itself. So this happened in Upper Burma. But there were other factors involved - political, economic and religious. Sidhu has not made any attempt to analyse the situation in the light of these factors. As a result, he has failed to assess the exact nature of the resistance. Throughout his account he has freely used the term 'dacoit'. Nowhere in the account does the term 'rebel' occur. Thus the Upper Burmans, at least those who could be identified by their motives, have been denied that much honour which the pacificators themselves did not hesitate to give in their official and unofficial accounts.

The most significant omission in this connection is that the thesis does not give any reference to individual pongyi participation in the resistance. It mentions U Oktama[5] once or twice, but does not introduce him as a pongyi. In the context of the Burmese resistance pongyi participation is a very significant feature as it tends to uphold the movement in popular estimation. From various official and unofficial sources it appears that numerous pongyis were associated with the resistance in one way or another.

Again, as to British policy, Sidhu's account is more descriptive than analytical. He does not show why Sir Charles Bernard's conciliatory policy in the first year of annexation failed to produce any satisfactory results. During this period the situation was aggravated by certain mistakes, namely, the failure to formulate a definite policy during the first three months of the occupation of Mandalay, the failure to bring in more troops immediately, and certain

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[5]He was the most veteran pongyi bo in the north.

excesses on the part of the police and the troops. Sidhu mentions only the first one and says, rather confidently, that the timely formulation of an administrative policy would have made the work of pacification comparatively inexpensive and bloodless. This is, perhaps, true. But he does not say how it aggravated the situation and why a mistake of this kind was made. Furthermore, he does not examine the punitive character of the Village Regulation of 1887 in its true perspective.

Thus there are numerous gaps in Jagjit Singh Sidhu's account. But before passing any judgement on Sidhu's work one has to take into consideration three things: first, the thesis is a pioneer work; secondly, it covers a period longer than that of the pacification of Upper Burma and, thirdly, preparing an M.A. thesis, the author did not have sufficient time to consult all the available sources.

In fact, the sources, especially the English ones, are numerous. While a full list of these sources is supplied in the Bibliography, a brief reference to their historiographic importance seems to be necessary to understand the basis of the present study.

The Burmese sources, which have been used for this study include some available Sittans or statements submitted by the headmen of different townships and villages in 1783 and 1802 and a few books, namely, Selections from the Records of the Hlutdaw,[6] compiled by Taw Sein Ko; Myanma Maha Mingala Mingandaw (Burmese

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[6] Hlutdaw = Supreme Council of the Burmese Kings.

State Ceremonies)[7] by U Ya Gyaw and Myanma Min Okchokpon Sadan (Administration of Burma under the Burmese Kings) by U Tin. So far as the traditional Burmese village system is concerned, the Sittans are an extremely valuable source. They give the ancestry of the village headman, the charge-boundaries and revenue customs and a Roll containing the inhabitants, classified according to sex, age and asu or group. Some of these Sittans, collected by J.S.Furnivall, were published in different issues of the Journal of the Burma Research Society, and some now in possession of Professor Frank N. Trager have been accessible to the author of the present study through the kind offices of Mr. William J. Koenig.

The English sources include a huge mass of printed material and manuscript preserved in the India Office Library. The printed material includes various letters and correspondence, proceedings, notes and memoranda, reports, parliamentary debates, papers presented to Parliament, and gazetteers and other Government publications. It has sometimes been difficult to reconcile the official view to the Burmese side of the picture. In such case every attempt has been made to find a balanced judgement by using some other categories of sources. In these categories come, first, the private papers and diaries of the men who were directly associated with the work of pacification and, secondly, several newspapers published in London, India and Burma. Some contemporary books, written by independent observers, come in the third category. Of these the following are worth noting: Burma after the Conquest by Grattan Geary, Burma under British Rule - and Before, vols. I and II by

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[7] Apart from various ceremonies relating to royalty, this book includes a short account of the Kings of the Alaungpaya dynasty.

John Nisbet, The Soul of a People and A People at School by H. Fielding Hall and Travels in and Diaries of India & Burma by I.P.Minayeff.

Grattan Geary, who went to Upper Burma two weeks after the occupation of Mandalay, has given an excellent account of the Burmese people - their character and convictions, their religion, their economic life and their overall reaction to British policy in those early days of occupation. Geary, it seems, tried to record his experience as an impartial observer. Nisbet was a forest officer in Upper Burma for a long time. Although his account of the Third Anglo-Burmese War and the pacification of Upper Burma following that War does not say anything more than what is recorded in the official papers, his general information about the country, people and government is extremely valuable. Fielding Hall, who was in Upper Burma before and after the War, has left sympathetic accounts of the Burmese people with reference to their religion, government, traditional community life and, above all, their war against the British. The Russian traveller Minayeff, who was in Mandalay for a few days early in 1886, has also given some valuable information in his account.

Last, and not least, in this category come several articles which were published in different periodicals between 1886 and 1893. These were written mostly by men who were associated with the Indian and Burmese administration during the period under review. While some of these articles are dry narratives of British activity, some contain information which has been found useful in one way or another in writing the story of the beginnings of British rule in Upper Burma.

Chapter One

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO THE CONQUEST OF UPPER BURMA

One Burmese historian has observed that the Second Anglo-Burmese War marked the beginning of the end for Burma.[1] There is ample truth in this statement. In the First Anglo-Burmese War (1824-1826)[2] Burma ceded Arakan, Assam and Tenasserim to the British. The British obtained two major advantages from these acquisitions. While the possession of Arakan and Assam secured the Indian North-Eastern Frontier, that of Tenasserim put the British in a better position to check Siam's southward expansion at the expense of the Malay States. So far as Burma was concerned, her military vulnerability was exposed and, above all, she lost a considerable amount of her sea frontage. But she had still a large opening to the sea, and her vast rich delta of the river Irrawaddy remained untouched. The Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852)[3] resulted in the annexation of Pegu by the British. Thus Burma was reduced to the condition of an inland power, and shut up in the Upper Valley of

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[1] Dr. Maung Maung, Burma in the Family of Nations (Amsterdam 1956), p.44.

[2] The annexation of Arakan by King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) brought Burma into collision with the British in Chittagong. The British territory was utilised as a sanctuary by some thousand of Arakanese refugees, who made raids from time to time and harassed the Burmese garrison. The Burmese demanded that the raiders should be given up to them. This being refused, friction developed which resulted in the First Anglo-Burmese War. The War was concluded by the Treaty of Yandabo.

[3] The Second Anglo-Burmese War is attributed mainly to the Burmese Kings' failure to comply with the Treaty of Yandabo.

the Irrawaddy.[4] She was no longer a troublesome neighbour. Furthermore, with Pegu she lost a rich area which had long been 'an important supplementary granary' for the people of the dry zone of the north.[5] Thus, to sum up, she lost all her seaports and the bulk of her rice lands, and for her contact with the outside world she was made dependent on the British. So, in effect, her remaining years were only a temporary lease of life.[6]

The question was how long that lease would extend. Mindon, who became King in February 1853, keenly felt the loss of Pegu which had always given the Burmese Government a larger revenue than any other province of the Kingdom.[7] The people, extremely proud as they were, felt deeply humiliated. The Myosas[8] of the Pegu townships especially resented this capitulation. In fact, neither the King nor the people could accept the loss of Pegu as final. In the beginning of 1855 a Burmese Mission arrived at Calcutta. The envoys brought presents for the Governor-General. Their chief objective was to persuade the Government of India to return the province of Pegu to Burma. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, was anxious to establish friendly relations with the King

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[4] Lieut.-Gen. Albert Fytche, Burma, Past and Present (London 1878), vol. 1, pp. 205-206.

[5] Janell Ann Nilsson, The Administration of British Burma, 1852-1885 unpub. Ph.D. Thesis (London 1970), pp. 5-6.

[6] Maung Maung, op.cit., p.44.

[7] Fytche, op.cit., vol. 1, p.206.

[8] Myo means 'town' and sa means 'to eat'. So Myosa means 'township-eater', i.e. one who enjoys the revenue of a township.

of Burma and to open up a new trade up the valley of the river Irrawaddy. But he was not ready to do these in exchange for Pegu.[9] So the Burmese envoys returned home disappointed.

However, for the next twenty years, Anglo-Burmese relations were, on the whole, good. This was due to Mindon who was one of the best kings who ever sat on the Burmese throne.[10] He clearly understood the implications of British Colonial expansion.[11] He realised that further hostility with the British would mean the end of the Burmese Kingdom. So, as long as he lived, his relations with the British were always correct.[12] His attitude was clearly reflected in the commercial treaties which the British managed to conclude with him in 1862 and 1867. The Treaty of 1862 was concluded following the visit of Colonel Phayre, the first Chief Commissioner of British Burma, to Mandalay. It provided, among other things, for the abolition of duties on both sides of the border.[13] The British performed their part of the agreement immediately. But the Burmese could not do this because of two practical difficulties. First, there was a formidable obstacle, namely, the system of royal monopoly. Nearly every article of produce in Upper Burma was a royal monopoly. No Burmese subject could sell anything,

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[9] Fytche, op.cit., vol. 1, p.207.

[10] Sir Arthur Phayre and Sir Albert Fytche, the first two Chief Commissioners of British Burma, who met King Mindon, spoke very highly of him.

[11] G. Coedes, The Making of South East Asia, translated by H.M.Wright (London 1962), p.190.

[12] D.G.E.Hall, Burma (London 1950), 2nd edition, p.123.

[13] Fytche, op.cit., vol. 1, p.209.

excepting through royal brokers, or with the express permission of the local authorities.[14] Although Mindon appeared to be very willing to carry out his part of the agreement,[15] it was not easy to do away with the old system. Secondly, in 1866 Upper Burma was shaken by a rebellion headed by two of Mindon's sons. Trade was paralysed for some time.[16] The economic situation in Upper Burma was so bad that the King was not in a position to reduce his frontier duties, or to forego any one of his monopolies.[17] However, by the Treaty of 1867 , which was concluded following a visit to Mandalay by Colonel Albert Fytche, Phayre's successor, the British got all that they could have reasonably expected. The King abandoned all his monopolies, excepting earth oil, timber and precious stones. The duties on all goods and merchandise passing between British and Burmese territories were reduced to a uniform rate of 5% ad valorem. A British Resident or Political Agent was to be always posted at Mandalay.[18]

With the death of Mindon in 1878 ended the best period of Anglo Burmese relations. Thibaw, Mindon's son and successor, was young and inexperienced and, inoffensive in disposition as he was,[19]

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[14] Fytche, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 210-211.

[15] Ibid., p.211.

[16] The British Burma Gazetteer, vol. 1 (Rangoon 1880), p.475.

[17] Fytche, op.cit., vol. 1, p.215.

[18] Ibid., p.231.

[19] Dr. Marks, Forty Years in Burma (London 1917), pp. 218, 227. Dr. Marks was Thibaw's tutor.

he appears to have been easily influenced for good or evil. So in no time he turned out to be a puppet in the hands of Sinbyumashin, Mindon's Chief Queen, and one Taingda, a Captain in the Palace, who raised him to the throne.[20] Sinbyumashin's influence was soon overshadowed by that of her daughter Supayalat, who was Thibaw's wife.[21] Supayalat was a woman of some determination and force of character.[22] She quickly made herself the ruling spirit in the State, the King and his Ministers being at her beck and call.[23] Her chief instrument was Taingda. The latter was an able man. For the assistance he had rendered to Thibaw at his accession he was made an Atwinwun or Minister of Interior. He rose rapidly in Queen Supayalat's favour so that he became the most influential man in the administration.[24]

So far as the British were concerned, these changes had one bad effect. Taingda, who now became Mingyi or Great Minister, entertained a strong animosity against the English.[25] As he was the most powerful man in the Hlutdaw or the Burmese Supreme Council, his attitude towards the English was bound to affect Anglo-Burmese relations. There was, however, a pro-English moderate Mingyi in the Council. He was the Kinwun Mingyi.

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[20] HTWP, Mss. Eur. E254 (India Office Library), Thirkell White's Note "The Last King of Burma", p.2; Grattan Geary, Burma after the Conquest (London 1886), p.206; W.S.Desai, Deposed King Thibaw of Burma in India (Bombay 1967), p.2.

[21] Reminiscences of the Court of Mandalay: extracts from the Diary of General Horace A. Browne, 1859-1879 (1907), p.164. General Browne was the last British Resident at Mandalay.

[22] HTWP, "The Last King of Burma", p.2.

[23] Desai, op.cit., p.2.

[24] Taw Sein Ko, Burmese Sketches (Rangoon 1913), pp. 47-48.

[25] Ibid., p.48.

A very energetic and upright man, he rose from an ordinary Wun or district governor to the position of 'Prime Minister'. He was very popular and respected for his scholarly disposition.[26] But his power and influence were greatly eclipsed by those of the Taingda Mingyi.[27] Although he still continued to be a force at the Court,[28] he failed to induce the puppet Thibaw to carry on the Government along the lines laid down by his father Mindon. No wonder Anglo-Burmese relations right from the beginning of Thibaw's reign "were of an extremely unsatisfactory and, at times, hostile character."[29]

One of the earliest signs of this changed relationship could be seen in an assault made on the Commander of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company's Steamer Yankeentoung and the forcible abduction of certain passengers from the vessel while at Myingyan on the night of 31 October 1878.[30] The relationship deteriorated rapidly following the British Resident's remonstrances over the alleged massacre of some eighty members of the royal family at Thibaw's accession.[31] The Burmese Government thought that such reaction on the part of the British was not in conformity with 'the Grand Friendship Treaty'

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[26] Taw Sein Ko, op.cit., p.47. See also R.R.Langham-Carter, "The Kinwun Mingyi at Home", JBRS, vol. XXV, part III, p.127 (1935).

[27] Taw Sein Ko, op.cit., p.47.

[28] Reminiscences of the Court of Mandalay, p.161.

[29] Political and Secret Memorandum, B39 (India Office Library), Burma by O.T.Burne, 17 February 1886. See also B 26 Burmah: attitude of King Theebaw, 1884.

[30] Cmd. 4614, 1886. Correspondence relating to Burmah since the accession of King Theebaw in October 1878, pp. 8-9.

[31] Ibid., p.7.

which was concluded in 1862. Thus the Burmese Minister for Foreign Affairs wrote to the British Resident, R.B.Shaw, on 22 February 1879 with reference to that treaty:

> "in conformity therewith the Burmese Government always desire and hope that the dominions of the British Government may be in peace and without disturbance; and the Minister trusts and believes that the British Government do also desire and hope the same with respect to the dominions of the Burmese Government. In regard to the clearing and keeping-by matter /Killing and imprisonment/, (Minister would remark) that such action is taken in consideration of the past and the future, only when there should exist a cause for disturbance."[32]

The Foreign Minister made it clear that the killing and imprisonment of certain members of the royal family were a political necessity and were quite in conformity with Burmese tradition.[33]

The British remonstrances seem to have caused a certain discontentment among the Upper Burmans, especially those living in the Capital and its immediate vicinity. It seems that the people viewed the British stand regarding the massacre as an interference in their country's internal affairs. The following extract from the Mandalay Confidential Diary of R.B.Shaw dated 26-27 May 1879 is worth noting in this connection:

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[32] Cmd. 4614, 1886, p.23, Enclosure 11 in Government of India's Letter No. 65 of 20 March 1879.

[33] According to the traditional pattern of power struggle in Burma, almost every succession to the throne was accompanied by the killing of certain persons of the blood royal. Thus King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) made a clean sweep of his rivals with their followers, servants and children, while King Bagyidaw (1819-1837) executed two of his uncles, one with his entire family and all loyal followers. So, as G.E.Harvey observed, Thibaw's massacre "differed from its forerunners neither in extent nor horror but only in taking place in the full light of modern publicity". See History of Burma (London 1925), pp. 264, 295, 338.

> "This morning [26 May 1879], when the Assistant Resident, Mr. Phayre, was returning from a ride, as he was passing a group of young men (Burmese) he was jeered at and called insulting names..... Such insulting conduct towards the officers of the Residency .....have become rather common during the last month or two...."[34]

Colonel Horace Browne, who succeeded R.B.Shaw as Resident in June 1879, recorded a similar experience in his Mandalay Confidential Diary of 31 July-2 August 1879:

> "This evening [1 August 1879] an angry crowd of royal servants ..... appeared armed with sticks at the gate of the Residency compound and expressed their intention of beating the Koola who had struck a dog in the street."[35]

Thus the Resident and his staff were passing anxious nights during this period. Colonel Browne, who remained in the post till the withdrawal of the Residency in October 1879, described the situation in his personal diary in the following words:

> "We are living on the slope of a volcano, unable to peer over the edge into the crater, and with no reliable seismograph to warn us when an eruption is likely to take place."[36]

The withdrawal of the British Residency was followed by two other anti-British incidents, such as the assault on the crew of the river Steamer Shwe Myo on 13 November 1879 and the seizure and detention of the river Steamer Yunan on 26 May 1880. The Burmese Government having failed to give satisfactory explanations in reference to these affairs,[37] the Government of India proposed to withdraw from

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[34] Cmd. 4614, p.28.

[35] Ibid., p.49.

[36] Reminiscences of the Court of Mandalay, p.162. See also Political and Secret Memoranda, B 21, Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Burma, Part 1, p.59.

[37] HC, vol. 80, pp. 761, 767-768, Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Burma, 1880-1885.

the treaties of 1862 and 1867. But Lord Hartington, the Secretary of State for India, did not approve the proposal. In a Minute of 7 December 1880 he wrote:

> "The policy appears to be extremely questionable. It is conceivable that the conduct of the Burmese Government may compel us to take this or even some stronger step, but I am inclined to think that we should withhold the authority asked for to denounce the treaty, not as a political measure, but as a fiscal and administrative one."[38]

However, the attitude of the Indian and Rangoon authorities was considerably stiffened after those incidents. They were no longer ready to exhibit anxiety for closer relations with the King of Burma, as they had done in the past. So they suggested to the Secretary of State that in future the first overtures for a revision of relations must originate from the King of Burma.[39] The Secretary of State concurred.[40]

This stand was maintained till April 1882 when a Burmese Mission arrived at Simla. In it the Secretary of State saw indications of a change of policy at the Burmese Court and hoped that it might be found possible to re-establish relations between the Government of India and that of Burma on a footing which would be mutually satisfactory.[41] Various matters were discussed between the Government of India and the Burmese envoys. The Burmese envoys proposed, among other things, a direct treaty with the Queen of Britain for free importation of arms through the British Burma seaports, and

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[38] HC, vol. 80, p.769. Correspondence relating to the Affairs of Burmah, 1880-1885.

[39] Ibid., p.772.

[40] Ibid., p.773.

[41] Ibid., p.776.

for an increase in the existing Burmese customs duties from 5°/o to 10°/o. The Indian Government insisted on the security and proper reception of the British Resident at Mandalay. The discussion appeared to be a success. But suddenly the Burmese envoys were recalled by their Government.[42]

It is not known why King Thibaw recalled his envoys so abruptly. The King was about this time deeply involved with the French. The latter with the blessings of the Taingda Mingyi were now a force at the Court. It might possibly have been that Thibaw was under pressure from the French not to yield anything to the British. The arrival of a Burmese Mission at Paris in May 1883, apparently for the purpose of gathering information relating to industrial arts and sciences,[43] made the British suspicious of a Franco-Burmese conspiracy against their interests in Indo-China.[44] It was an alarming situation for the British - alarming because of 'the aggressive and unquiet spirit' of French policy.[45] The French had now made themselves masters of Cochin China, Cambodia, Annam and Tongking. Their next move was to obtain a definite foot-hold in the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy. It was impossible for a British administration in Lower Burma to acquiesce in such a foot-hold being interposed between British Burma and China. It would not only affect British commercial interests in that region, it would

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[42] HC, vol. 80, pp. 779-788.

[43] Cmd. 4614, 1886, p.105.

[44] Hall, op.cit., p.171.

[45] DP, Reel 516, No. 16, from Lord Kimberley, Secretary of State, 5 February 1885.

also create certain practical difficulties for the British. If Upper Burma passed under French influence with its only or chief access to the sea across a British railway or along a British river, there would be probability of frequent differences between English and French officials on the two sides of the border and these differences might any day become serious. Again, the French, if established in Upper Burma, might attempt to get other European nations join them in neutralising Upper Burma and making the river Irrawaddy open to vessels of all the world. Above all, they might be a threat to the Indian North-Eastern Frontier.

So the British were feeling very uneasy at the growing intimacy between the Burmese and the French. Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador in Paris, was in constant touch with the French Foreign Ministry in order to know what was going on between the Burmese envoys and the French Government. Early in November, 1883 Lord Lyons made it clear to the then French Foreign Minister, M. Challemel Lacour, that in consequence of its vicinity to British India and of its political relations with that Empire, Burma occupied a peculiar position with regard to the British Government, and one which gave them a special interest in all that concerned it.[46] When it was understood that a treaty was about to be signed between the Burmese envoys and the French Government, Lord Lyons met M. Jules Ferry, Challemel's successor, on 12 December 1883 and told him that the British Government entertained serious objections to any agreement between Burma and a foreign Government containing stipulations beyond

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[46] HC, vol. 80, p.790.

those of a purely commercial character.[47] Ferry assured Lyons that any treaties or conventions which might be the result of the Franco-Burmese negotiations would be of a commercial or consular character.[48] Ferry, however, admitted that the Burmese envoys insisted on an alliance of defensive and offensive nature, and that the French Government did not accept an offer of this kind.[49]

But the Franco-Burmese Treaty, which was eventually concluded in January 1885,[50] although commercial in nature, did not specify the functions of the French Consul who was to be stationed at Mandalay. So the Consul could, if necessary, meddle in political matters to the great disadvantage of the British. This was clear from the proceedings of M. Haas, who arrived in Mandalay in May 1885 to take up his duties as consul. He immediately began to act in a way which was quite inconsistent with the assurances of Jules Ferry. The French Consul was reported to be trying hard to establish himself strongly at Mandalay.[51] He was constantly in touch with the Burmese Ministers. Soon it came to the notice of the British Burma authorities that the French had managed to extract from the Burmese Government certain concessions of a very extensive nature. The French, it was learnt, were to construct a railway from Mandalay to Toungoo, and to establish a bank at Mandalay. As to the

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[47] HC, vol. 80, p.791.

[48] Ibid., pp.792-793

[49] Ibid., p.796.

[50] Ibid., p.813.

[51] PSCI, vol. 45, p.209, Letter from Bernard, the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, to H.M.Durand, Secretary to the Government of India, 4 July 1885.

first, the French would make an outlay for the expenses of construction. In return the Burmese Government would by way of the guarantee include in the 'Railway Contract' the earth-oil customs and the import customs on all European goods via the river Irrawaddy. The duties would be levied jointly by an Agent commissioned by the French Government and one commissioned by the Burmese Government, while the receipts would be set off against the interest due on the outlay for expenses of construction. As to the second, the French would lay out a capital of twenty-five million rupees, half of which would be constituted the share of the Burmese Government. The interest on the outlay would run at 1°/o. The 'Bank Contract' also would include the ruby mines and the revenues on tea.[52]

There were rumours of other concessions, such as those of starting French steamers on the Irrawaddy, exploiting the jewel mines, and establishing a traffic route from Upper Tongking through the Shan States to Mandalay.[53] Thus the French were about to dominate all trade and the chief sources of revenue in Upper Burma. M. Haas made it quite clear, as it had been his intention to do, that the French had as much interest in Upper Burma as the British, and that the latter, before making any attempt to interfere in the affairs of Upper Burma, "must first come to some settlement at home with France".[54] He also succeeded in making the Anglo-Burmese rift

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[52] PSCI, vol. 45, pp. 219-220, two documents translated and attached to the Chief Commissioner's letter of 28 July 1885.

[53] Ibid., p.209.

[54] HC, vol. 81, p.529, Andreino to Jones, 13 September 1885.

complete by giving "the Burmese all the good advice he possibly could".[55]

For the British the situation was so critical that Bernard, the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, who was always opposed to the idea of annexation, thought that the matter could be settled only by the use of force.[56] The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, held a similar view. He wrote to the Secretary of State on 2 August 1885 that the establishment by France of exclusive or dominant influence in Upper Burma would involve such serious consequences to Britain's Burmese and Indian possessions that it should be prevented even at the risk of hostilities with Mandalay.[57]

When the British were thinking of using force came the final provocation from the Franco-Burmese entente. The French were not satisfied with what they had obtained from the Burmese by way of concessions; they wanted more. Their eyes fell upon the Ningyan teak forests which were then being worked by a British firm, known as the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation, under a contract with the Burmese Government. The French Consul persuaded Thibaw to take the forests back from the Corporation and give them to the French.[58] Coincidentally, the Burmese Government discovered certain irregularities in the proceedings of the Corporation. The latter was charged with extracting more than twice the number of logs paid for, with bribing the local officials and with failing to pay its Burmese

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[55] HC., vol. 81, p.529. This is known from a private letter of Andreino, the Italian Consul at Mandalay, to Jones of the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation, dated 13 September 1885. Andreino, who was in close touch with the French Consul, acted as a British informer on a remuneration of Rs. 2,000 a year.

[56] PSCI, vol. 45, p.212, Bernard's letter to Government of India, 27 July 1885.

[57] Ibid., p.213.

[58] Ibid., p.225, Bernard to Durand (Demi-official), 11 August 1885.

employees. It is difficult to say how far these charges were real, but they provided Thibaw with good grounds for imposing a heavy fine on the Corporation. The latter was fined a sum of £146,000 and was ordered to pay £33,333 to the foresters. This was, indeed, a heavy blow to the Corporation. It meant that either the Corporation could pay and stay, or quit. But the firm had a very big stake in its undertaking. This might be gauged from the fact that it had several thousands of employees, of whom some 2,000 were British subjects, 900 elephants, some 10,000 buffaloes, and about 150,000 logs of teak in different conditions of preparedness for export.[59] The Government of India couldnot acquiesce in the decision of the Burmese Government.[60] They proposed that the matter should go before an arbitrator.[61] This being rejected, an ultimatum was despatched to King Thibaw on 22 October 1885. The terms of this ultimatum were the reception of an envoy with free access to the King, the suspension of proceedings against the Bombay-Burmah Corporation until the arrival of the envoy, and the acceptance of a permanent Resident with a proper guard for his protection. The Burmese Government were also warned that they would be expected in future to regulate their external affairs in accordance with the advice of the Government of India and to grant proper facilities for the development of British trade with Western China through Bhamo.[62]

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[59] PSCI, vol. 45, pp. 921-922, Bernard's Demi-official to Durand, 15 September 1885.

[60] Cmd. 4614, p.206, Letter from the Officiating Sec. to the Chief Commissioner, British Burma, to the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Mandalay, 28 August 1885.

[61] Ibid., p.207.

[62] Ibid., p.221.

The Burmese Government reacted sharply. On 7 November Thibaw issued a proclamation to his subjects calling for a holy war against the English Kalas.[63] The following extract from this proclamation is worth noting:

> "Those heretics, the English Kalas barbarians, having most harshly made demands calculated to bring about the impairment and destruction of our religion, the violation of our national traditions and customs, and the degradation of our race, are making a show and preparation as if about to wage war with our State ..... To uphold the religion, to uphold the national honour, to uphold the country's interests, will bring about threefold good; good of our religion, good of our master, and good of ourselves ..... Whoever, therefore, is willing to join and serve zealously will be assisted by His Majesty with royal rewards and royal money, and be made to serve in the capacity for which he may be fit."[64]

This proclamation seems to have made a great deal of appeal to the religious and national sentiment of the Burmese people. Numerous Bos[65] came forward and took an oath to help the King.[66] But there was hardly any time left for Thibaw to assemble a large army,[67] because within a week of the issue of his proclamation the British troops, commanded by Major-General Prendergast, were on their way to Mandalay.[68]

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[63] Kala means, in the first place, a native of India and, secondly, any Western foreigner, such as an Arab or European, H.Yule, A Narrative of the Mission sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855 (London 1858), p.5.

[64] Cmd. 4614, p.257. The Burmese reply to the ultimatum, which was received on 9 November 1885, was tantamount to a refusal or evasion of the three terms, Cmd. 4614, p.230, Tel. from Viceroy to the Secretary of State, 10 November 1885.

[65] Bo means 'captain'. Here it is synonymous with 'leader'.

[66] MLEI, vol. 957, M 1927, p.3.

[67] Thibaw's troops were estimated to number at most 20,000, including perhaps a few thousand hastily raised levies drawn from shop-keepers, writers, carpenters, tailors and cultivators. See History of the Third Burmese War, Period 1, Intelligence Branch of Quarter-Master General's Department in India, 1887, p.36; E.D.Cuming, In the Shadow of the Pagoda (London 1897), p.250; Geary, op.cit., p.60.

[68] The British Expeditionary Force crossed the frontier on 14 November 1885. Its strength was 11,844, including followers.

The Government of India's action was afterwards fiercely criticised in the British Parliament. Hunter, an opposition member, charged the Government with waging an unnecessary war against the King of Burma. His argument was that Upper Burma, being separated from the sea by a British Province, was entirely at the mercy of Britain in a military sense.[69] Hunter also pointed out that the annexation of Upper Burma was not a new idea and that for many years there had been an annexationist party, not only among the merchants of Rangoon, but also in the ranks of the Government Service. The Government of India, he thought, were so influenced by this party that they were not anxious to settle the dispute with the King of Burma.[70] He argued that the dispute over the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation case could have been amicably settled, if the Government of India had wanted. Thus he wrote:

> "That was evident from a letter written by Mr. Jones, the agent or representative of the Bombay Company, to the Chief Commissioner of Burmah, dated the 21st of September last year. He said he could have settled the question, and it would have been in the interests of the Company, in a pecuniary sense, to have settled it; but, having been assisted in the way they had been by the Government, he was not going to do it."[71]

But Andreino, the Italian Consul, who was also an agent of the Corporation, admitted that all arguments for an amicable settlement were exhausted.[72] Even if the dispute was settled, the basic problem which was created because of the growing French influence

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[69] Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, vol. CCCII, 3rd Series, London, 1886, pp. 325-326, House of Commons, 25 January 1886.

[70] Ibid., pp. 326-328.

[71] Ibid., pp. 327-328.

[72] Cmd. 4614, p.208, Telegram from Andreino, dated 24 August 1885. Charles Lee Keeton has given an excellent account of the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation Case in his recent work, King Thebaw and the Ecological Rape of Burma (Delhi, 1974), Chapter 7. There is also a huge mass of official papers on the case in PSCI, vol. 45.

in the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy would not have been solved. Hunter did not mention this problem in his speech. His speech only indicated the existence of a commercial motive. There was, indeed, a very strong commercial motive, namely, the desire to establish commercial links with South-West China through Bhamo. The river system in Burma seemed to provide possibilities for access to the China trade. So the French were as much interested in controlling the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy as the British. In this sense, the commercial motive, which Hunter's speech indicated, was closely connected with the basic problem.

Indeed, the prospect of a lucrative trade with the people of South-West China was made to look very promising by the promoters of this scheme. They said that the Chinese provinces neighbouring Burma contained approximately 103 million inhabitants and that such a vast population was hardly touched by European commerce.[73] They also spoke of the enormous wealth of these provinces and their gigantic trade in tea, silk, rhubarb, tobacco, sugar, hemp, oil, varnish and other commodities,[74] and estimated the value of this trade for 1855 at about £500,000.[75] Indeed, for many years it had been the object of the British commercial communities to open up South-West China together with the Shan States to British commerce. As far back as 1829 Lord William Bentinck and, in 1836,

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[73] Archibald R. Colquhoun, Report on the Railway Connexion of Burmah and China (London 1887), p.11.

[74] Selections from the Records of the Government of India, p.6, Memorandum by the Chief Commissioner of British Burma, 30 June 1869, attached to the Official Narrative of the Expedition to Explore the trade routes to China via Bhamo under the guidance of Major E.B.Sladen (Calcutta 1870).

[75] Ibid., p.2; Colquhoun, Burma and the Burmans (London 1885), p.33.

Lord Auckland, interested themselves in the question of opening communication with the Shan States and South-West China. In 1861 Sir Arthur Phayre, the first Chief Commissioner of British Burma, recommended the sanction of a survey to Kiang Hung. In 1866 Lord Salisbury, then Viscount Cranborne, acknowledging the importance of the question, sanctioned a railway survey to China, which, however, was not carried out. In 1869 the Duke of Argyll sanctioned a survey between Tonghoo and Kiang Hung. In 1874 Lord Salisbury once more sanctioned a survey to Kiang Hung or some point near it. But in spite of all these, no survey was executed beyond the British boundary until in 1882 the exploration of Southern China was undertaken by A.R.Colquhoun.[76]

Thus the British desire to reach "the teeming millions of a nation of born traders"[77] was historical. The British could not afford to see Upper Burma pass under French control and with it the so-called valuable trade routes to Southern China. They became extremely anxious as King Thibaw became involved more and more deeply with the French. Between October 1884 and October 1885 various chambers of commerce in Calcutta, Rangoon, London and Glasgow expressed their anxiety over the situation in Upper Burma and urged the Government to intervene.[78] The Secretary of State, Lord Randolph Churchill, eventually thought that the annexation of Upper Burma

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[76] Colquhoun, Report on the Railway Connexion of Burma and China, pp. 9-10.

[77] W.B.B., "Upper Burma During 1886", The Scottish Geographical Magazine, vol. III, 1887, p.420.

[78] Cmd. 4614, pp. 139-140, 146-147, 153-154, 160, 162-167, 216-217, 225-227.

would not be unpopular in England.[79]

So there was a strong commercial motive. But it would be wrong to think that the war against Thibaw was undertaken simply for the purpose of extending British trade. Such a war, as Lord Kimberley, Churchill's successor, emphatically pointed out in the House of Lords later, would have been an unjustifiable war.[80] In fact, the question of armed intervention would not have arisen if Thibaw had kept himself aloof from European politics. In other words, had there been no French involvement, Thibaw's Burma would have given the British all the advantages of annexation. She would have complied with the treaties of 1862 and 1867, protected British subjects, and allowed the British every opportunity to bring South-West China within the sphere of British commerce. Under the circumstances, such isolated cases of assault on British subjects and steamers as had occurred since Thibaw's accession would have been viewed as mere accidents rather than deliberate provocation. The British would not have marched their troops up the Irrawaddy on such ordinary grounds. They would not have done this on the ground of alleged 'misrule' either. True, since King Mindon's death in 1878, Upper Burma was politically unsettled. The presence of numerous minthas or princes, the existence of a vast number of semi-independent States and tribes, and the traditional loose control of the central government over these States and tribes in particular and the far-flung areas of the Kingdom in general tended to create a very

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[79] DP, Reel 517, Churchill to Dufferin, 16 October 1885.

[80] Hansard, vol. 302, p.850.

unsettled political situation at every succession to the throne. These had nothing to do with the overall commercial position of the British of Lower Burma. Bernard admitted this in reply to the Rangoon merchants' representation that Thibaw's 'misrule' was ruining British trade. He pointed out that the average value of trade between British Burma and Upper Burma during the four years after Thibaw's accession was somewhat larger than that during the four years before his accession.[81]

Lord Dufferin also did not believe that the depression of trade in British Burma was occasioned by Thibaw's 'misrule'. The real causes, he wrote, were the speculative trade generated by the high prices of rice in 1882 and 1883 and the existing low prices of food-grains in Europe. During 1884, he continued, there was a loss of £1 per ton on 635,000 tons of rice exported abroad. On the other hand, the failure of the rice crop in Upper Burma and the short rice crop in British Burma had reduced the demand for foreign goods. Then again, the Viceroy pointed out, the teak trade had gone to pieces, teak averaging only £29 a ton in January 1885, as compared with £60 a ton the year before.[82]

Thus neither a few isolated cases of assault on British river steamers and subjects, nor the alleged 'misrule' of King Thibaw occasioned the Third Anglo-Burmese War. It was the menacing Franco-Burmese entente which caused the British to take up arms against

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[81] HC, vol. 80, p.804. The average value of trade during the four years after Thibaw's accession was £3,224,814 and that during the four years before his accession was £3,061,174.

[82] DP, Reel 517, to Kimberley, 10 February 1885.

Thibaw. The Burmese Government, however, thought that they were acting within their rights. In a letter to the Chief Commissioner, British Burma, dated November 1885 they wrote:

> "The internal and external affairs of an independent State are regulated and controlled in accordance with the custom and law of that State. Friendly relations with France, Italy and other States have been, are being, and will be, maintained."[83]

They were right, no doubt. But in those days of international commercial contest it was a very risky policy unless backed by sufficient military strength. Upper Burma had no military power in the real sense of the term. Strong, courageous and patient though they were,[84] the Burmans hardly made good soldiers because of their characteristic aversion to discipline.[85] The first two wars had clearly exposed their vulnerability. They were especially unlucky because their country lay between the commercial empires of the two most powerful rivals of the time.

So for Thibaw it was a question of good judgement rather than of arrogance. His best chance of saving his country lay in choosing the right ally. But, unfortunately for him and his country, he chose the wrong one. France was not as potent an ally as Britain

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[83] PSCI, vol. 45, pp. 1356-1357.

[84] J.J.Snodgrass, Narrative of the Burmese War (London 1827), pp. 61, 95; H.H.Wilson, Documents illustrative of the Burmese War with an introductory sketch of the events of the war and an appendix (Calcutta 1827), p.23; H.Havelock, Memoir of the Three Campaigns of Major-General Sir Archibald Campbell's army in Ava (Serampore 1828), p.147; J.Crawfurd, Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava (London 1834), vol. II, p. 159; Sir Arthur P.Phayre, History of Burma (London 1883), p.258; Shway Yoe (Sir George Scott), The Burman, His Life and Notions (London 1882), p.497.

[85] Ever since their defeat in the First Anglo-Burmese War the Burmese Government had employed European instructors to train their army. But the result was very unsatisfactory. See Fytche, op.cit., p.120; Shway Yoe, op.cit., p.504.

would have been, considering their respective geographical proximity to Upper Burma and their power and resources. Thibaw and his Ministers did not understand this. They thought that both were European Powers and as such were equally powerful. This might be true in Europe, but in the East the situation was different. Here ever since the Battle of Wandewash in 1760[86] the balance of power was decisively in favour of the British.

Thibaw and his Ministers do not seem to have understood another thing, namely, the real motive of their ally. They thought that the French were interested in trade only. They did not for a moment suspect that their ally wanted to dominate their country both politically and commercially. They might be willing to waive suzerainty over certain Shan States east of the Mekong river in favour of France.[87] But they certainly did not want to sell out their independence. The British, however, saw through the French manoeuvre right from the beginning, and this is why they were uneasy and, at times, very aggressive in their correspondence with

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[86] The Anglo-French rivalry over India ended with the French defeat at the battle of Wandewash in 1760. France ceased to be a military power in India.

[87] HC, vol. 82, p.1373. From one of the documents relating to negotiations for a Franco-Burmese alliance discovered in the Council Chamber, Mandalay, immediately after the occupation of the Capital it is known that the Burmese were about to cede certain Shan States to the French.

the King of Upper Burma.[88] Only a few months after the occupation of Mandalay the French Consul-General in India, Monsieur J. Harmand, in an interview with Lord Dufferin, admitted that Jules Ferry's plan was to establish large French commercial interests at Mandalay and to secure the political ascendancy of France in the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy, with the view of acquiring a position which would enable him to put pressure upon England, and thus obtain whatever advantages such a condition of things might procure.[89]

Thus by forming an alliance with the French King Thibaw created a situation in which British intervention was inevitable. The British had no Agent at Mandalay to look after their interests. The information which they managed to collect through some of their paid informers stationed at Mandalay was sometimes confusing. However, one thing was certain - the French Consulate at Mandalay was very active. So the British had to move in fast before the French were able to make the restoration of Britain's "legitimate position" in the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy "altogether impossible".[90]

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[88] By July 1885 the British could claim to have possessed clear evidence of Jules Ferry's duplicity. Early in 1885, when the Franco-Burmese Treaty was signed, Jules Ferry handed a secret letter to the Burmese envoys. This letter, a copy of which was sent to Chief Commissioner Bernard by a royal servant, contained the following passage: "With respect to transport through the province of Tonquin to Burma of arms of various kinds, ammunition, and military stores generally, amicable arrangements will be come to with the Burmese Government for the passage of the same when peace and order prevails in Tonquin, and the officers stationed there are satisfied that it is proper, and that there is no danger." See Cmd. 4614, pp. 169-170.

[89] DP, Reel 516, from Dufferin to Kimberley, 28 July 1886.

[90] Political and Secret Memoranda, B 39, Burma by O.T.Burne. See also Major-Gen. A.R.McMahon's "Matters in Burmah" in Macmillan's Magazine, vol. LIII, p.314, November 1885 to April 1886.

Chapter Two

THE AFTERMATH OF CONQUEST: UNREST AND ITS RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CAUSES

The Expeditionary Force under Major-General Prendergast occupied Mandalay on 28 November 1885 and, on the same day, Thibaw bawahyin mintayagyi hpaya[1] surrendered himself and his Kingdom. It was an easy victory. Joseph Dautremer, who was Consul for France in Rangoon, wrote that the advance upon Mandalay was "a mere military promenade".[2] There was some resistance at Sinbaungwe and Minhla[3] but elsewhere the townsfolk and villagers were reported to show the utmost friendliness towards the force.[4] Consequently, the British thought that their advance up the Irrawaddy was looked upon by the Upper Burmans as a deliverance from past and existing evils[5] and that there was no genuine eagerness on their part to resist the invasion.[6] It was even thought that, as the advance coincided with an almost continuous rain, which was good for harvest but a most unusual thing in Upper Burma at that time, the Burmese people considered it as a proof that British arms were supported by

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[1] Bawahyin = Lord of Life; mintayagyi hpaya = King of Law. The whole constitutes a title of the Burmese King.

[2] Joseph Dautremer, Burma Under British Rule (London 1913), p.74, translated by Sir J.G.Scott.

[3] Cmd. 4614, 1886, Correspondence relating to Burmah since the accession of King Theebaw in October, 1878, pp. 232-233.

[4] IMP, vol. 2768, pp. 91-92; MLEI, vol. 958, M 2423, p.11; The Pioneer Mail, 2 December 1885, p.551.

[5] Cmd. 4614, p.246, telegram from Chief Commissioner, British Burma, to Secretary of State, 27 November 1885.

[6] MLEI, vol. 957, M 1927/1886, Diary of Field Force, p.3.

the powers of Nature.[7]

But this optimism was an illusion.[8] After Thibaw's organised troops retreated, having been completely defeated and broken up, the civilian population in the areas concerned hastened to prove their loyalty to the conquerors as earnestly as possible. It was more likely fear than love which led them to do so. In fact, no army of occupation could ever expect any genuine loyalty from the people of an occupied territory before they had done enough to restore the confidence of the latter. Apart from this, there seems to have been a certain anti-British feeling in the upper region across the frontier, which tends to nullify the idea that the people there had been waiting for British rule. As we have seen,[9] ever since Thibaw's accession in 1878 Anglo-Burmese relations had deteriorated steadily. Several cases of assault on British river steamers and subjects were reported during 1879 and 1880. Thus an uneasy situation had developed. The last two British Residents at Mandalay, R.B.Shaw and Colonel Horace Browne, mentioned this in their diaries.[10] This situation seems to have existed right up to the last day of Thibaw's reign, because Fielding Hall, who was in Upper Burma immediately before the war, wrote about this.[11] He wrote that his few months in Upper Burma in the King's time before the war were full of danger.[12] Away up

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[7] Sir James George Scott, Burma As it was, As it is and As it will be (London 1886), p.111.

[8] J.S.Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice (New York 1948), p.70; D.M.Smeaton, The Loyal Karens of Burma (London 1887), p.3; J.Chailley-Bert, The Colonisation of Indo-China (London 1894), pp. 155-156, translated from the French by Arthur Baring Brabant.

[9] See above, pp.19-21.

[10] See above, pp.21-22.

[11] Fielding Hall managed to escape from Upper Burma after the outbreak of war. He returned to Upper Burma after the fall of Mandalay. He was by title sub-divisional officer. He sometimes acted as intelligence officer to the troops.

[12] H.Fielding Hall, The Soul of a People (London [illegible]), p.1.

1898

in Mandalay, he wrote, there was talk and threats of many things.[13] At Ningyan, where he and some other British residents were trapped, insults and threats were sometimes called after them. There were rumours that the British residents at Ningyan would be arrested and sent in chains to Mandalay.[14] Thus, before their escape, the British residents at Ningyan had spent many a sleepless night for fear of being robbed by bad characters or seized by Thibaw's troops to be sent to Mandalay.[15]

Thus, the idea that the Burmese people were awaiting annexation was unfounded. This was later admitted by Brigadier-General White, who accompanied the Expeditionary Force, in a letter to his son. White wrote:

> "It is a mistake to suppose that these people were anxiously awaiting annexation. The more I see & hear, the more convinced I am that they are very loyal, in their easy-going way, to the house of Alompra."[16]

Indeed, the first burst of exultation and satisfaction with which the success had been greeted on the British side,[17] was quickly succeeded by a feeling that the conquest was only nominal, that the people of Upper Burma were not willing to surrender their country

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[13] H. Fielding Hall, A People at School (London 1906), p.33. This is why Colonel E.B. Sladen, the Chief Political Officer with the Expeditionary Force, had feared the massacre of "every European" at Mandalay in the event of there being the slightest mistake on the part of the British. Presumably, by "every European" Sladen meant every Englishman or European in the service of the English, because other Europeans were on good terms with Thibaw's Government. See SC, Sladen's letter to Moylan, the Times Correspondent, 6 January 1886, Mss Eur E. 290, India Office Library. Sladen was known to be an expert on the Burmese situation. He was sent to Mandalay in 1866 on special duty. He negotiated the Anglo-Burmese Commercial Treaty of 1867. He was Commissioner of Arakan from 1876 to 1885.

[14] H. Fielding Hall, A People at School, p.34.

[15] Ibid., p.37.

[16] Sir Mortimer Durand, The Life of Field Marshal Sir George White, V.C., vol. 1 (Edin. & London 1915), p.330.

[17] Lord Dufferin and General Prendergast were warmly greeted by the Queen-Empress and the Secretary of State for India, Cmd. 4614, pp. 247,258; DP, Reel 516, No.22. Prendergast was immediately awarded the distinction of K.C.B.

without a fight, and that more efforts would be necessary to make the conquests a reality. This was a situation which was certainly not foreseen.[18]

The first sign of Burmese dissatisfaction could be seen at the time of King Thibaw's deportation, which was the second immediate objective of the Expedition. Although the British believed that Thibaw was not popular with his people, they did not forget the fact that the Burmans had a sentimental attachment to the King. Colonal Sladen had pointed out some time before that the Burmese people were "imbued with an almost superstitious veneration for the Royal family".[19] Sladen spoke on this point "from experience, having for a long time past studied and learned the true feelings of the people".[20] So the British had naturally expected a certain reaction on the part of the Burmese people at their King's removal. Even they could not ignore the possibility of there being an attempt to rescue the King. There was already a rumour to this end[21] in addition to the knowledge that Thibaw was prepared for flight, and that fifty elephants with trusted friends were in waiting for him at Sheinmaga, twelve miles up the Irrawaddy, to convey him to Shwebo.[22] Every precaution was, therefore, taken for a quick and safe deportation which was, according to the British

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[18] Anonymous, "The Conquest of Burma", The Edinburgh Review, vol. CLXV, 1887, p.496; Durand, op.cit., p.343, White's letter to his son, 15 May 1886.

[19] SC, Report on "The Present Political Situation", 17 November 1885, p.40.

[20] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[21] Major E.C.Browne, The Coming of the Great Queen (London 1888), p.185. Major Browne accompanied the Expeditionary Force as officer commanding, Mounted Infantry.

[22] Cmd. 4887, 1886, Further Correspondence, p.6, Sladen to Durand, Secretary to Govt. of India, 16 December 1885.

notion, essential for a speedy restoration of law and order.[23] The road from the steps of the Palace to the eastern gateway was lined on both sides by double files of troops.[24] The Royal party, consisting of sixty-eight people,[25] passed along this heavily guarded road towards the eastern gateway, whence they were taken in carriages and conveyed under escort of a brigade to the steamer Thuriya in which they were to proceed to Rangoon.[26] Even from the bund to the barge leading to the Thuriya a chain of sentries kept the road and, on the Thuriya itself were sentries standing only a few paces apart.[27]

Such were the precautions and, indeed, the city people had no chance to do anything for the King beyond wailing and lamenting. The quick deportation of Thibaw had as much a paralysing effect on the city people as the rapid advance upon and the occupation of Mandalay had upon Thibaw and his army. The Special Correspondent of the Pioneer Mail, who was at Mandalay at the time of Thibaw's deportation, gave the following account:

> "The city people had not been fully aware that the King was to be taken away until they saw our troops marching with Thebaw and the royal family in their midst. Then they awoke to the fact and a great cry went up from men, women, and children alike . They bowed down to the ground doing shikko .....[while the procession was slowly moving towards the river bank] an enormous crowd had assembled, and..... grew more and more excited, and at intervals their lament rose up on the night air.....

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[23] PSCI, vol. 45, p.1361, Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State, 20 November 1885.

[24] Cmd. 4887, p.8.

[25] Cmd. 4614, p.260.

[26] King Thibaw was taken from Rangoon via Madras to Ratnagiri fort on the Bombay coast. He remained there till his death on 15 December 1916. Supayalat was allowed to return to Burma in 1919 and was accommodated in a double-storey house with a pension of Rs. 4000 per month. She died in 1925. See W.S. Desai, Deposed King Thibaw of Burma in India (Bombay 1967), pp. 74, 97.

[27] The Pioneer Mail, 16 December 1885, p.619.

> A few stones and clods of earth were thrown by the crowd..."[28]

Indeed, the whole spectacle of the King and Queen being carried away in a common hackney carriage, with no respect or honour shown to them, broke the hearts of many.[29] One maid of honour of Queen Supayalat said to Fielding Hall:

> "Thakin, you may say she was not a good queen, he was not a good king, but they were our own. Do you think we can love a foreign master as we loved our King, who was, as it were, part of ourselves?"[30]

Grattan Geary, who visited Upper Burma only two weeks after the fall of Mandalay, wrote that when the people in the villages came to know about the surrender and deportation of the King and Queen they "wept and broke out into lamentations".[31]

Colonel Sladen also heard wailings of women here and there and saw slight signs of impatience on the part of the crowd which increased with the darkness.[32] But the Government of India did not give any importance to this incident. The Viceroy reported to the Secretary of State that no one seemed to have regretted the King's

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[28] The Pioneer Mail, 16 December 1885, p.619. Shikko is a Burmese gesture of respect. According to this custom, the subordinate kneels before the superior with bowed head in an attitude of worship. According to Major Enriquez, it arose from a well-founded fear of princes and ministers upon whose actions there was no restraint, Races of Burma (Calcutta 1923), p34.

[29] H.Fielding Hall, Thibaw's Queen (London & New York 1899), p.292; Maung Htin Aung, The Stricken Peacock (The Hague 1965), p.92.

[30] H. Fielding Hall, Thibaw's Queen, p.293. Literally Thakin means master or lord.

[31] Grattan Geary, Burma after the Conquest (London 1886), p.294.

[32] Cmd. 4887, p.8, Sladen to Durand, 16 December 1885; Browne, op.cit., p.186. Colonel Browne rode alongside the King's carriage.

disappearance.[33] It was, as the Government of India held, one of those ordinary "royal incidents" to which the Burmese people had been long accustomed, and to which they attributed "very little significance".[34]

But the gravity of the situation could be well understood by the steps which were taken by the military authorities immediately after the Royal party was placed on board the Thuriya.[35] Troops were ordered to march from the river bank to the city for the purpose of holding the five city gates and bridges; four companies were placed on each side of the city and strong patrols were constantly sent out during the night through the city and suburbs.[36] In fact, the city and the suburbs were much disturbed on the evening of 29 December and frequent shots were heard in all directions.[37] The Field Force Diary, however, records only two dead bodies as a result of that evening's disturbances.[38]

The various security, civil and administrative measures taken during the next few days prove the anxiety of the Mandalay authorities. As to the security measures, reconnaissance parties were sent out in various directions to study the situation.[39] Guards were placed on

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[33] HC, vol. 83, p.853. Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State, 13 February 1886.

[34] PGLIB, vol. 84, pp. 1164-1165. Government of India Letter No. 52, 19 October 1886.

[35] Embarkation was complete by 6 p.m.

[36] MLEI, vol. 958, M 2423/1886, Diary of the Field Force, p.16.

[37] Ibid., p.16.

[38] Ibid., p.17.

[39] IMP, vol. 2768, pp. 173-175, Diary of the Field Force.

the French and Italian Consulates and on the houses of other principal residents.[40] They were also placed on the gun and powder factories, the royal workshops and the royal timber yard.[41] Pickets and outposts were established on all the main roads leading to the city.[42] Lastly, a general disarmament of the people was ordered.[43] No persons, excepting the members and staff of the Hlutdaw, the Burmese Supreme Council, were allowed to possess arms, unless authorised to do so. All persons who possessed any cannon, jingals, muskets, swords, spears, or other weapons of offence, save and except weapons like table knives, were called upon to deliver them up at once. Anybody found possessing any of the prohibited arms was liable to be shot.[44]

Simultaneously, civil and administrative measures, essentially conciliatory in nature, were taken. The Hlutdaw or the Supreme Council of the Burmese Kings was allowed to continue in being from 1 December. The Hlutdaw was one of the two councils by which the King ruled his Kingdom. The other council was the Byedaik or the Privy Council. A brief reference to the composition, powers and functions of these councils is perhaps necessary to understand the traditional pattern

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[40] IMP, vol. 2768, p.172.

[41] Ibid., p.173.

[42] Browne, op.cit., p.192.

[43] IMP, vol. 2768, p.173, Diary of the Field Force.

[44] Copies of the disarmament proclamation in English and Burmese are preserved with the Sladen Collection in the India Office Library.

of Burmese administration which the British inherited and retained as a temporary arrangement.

The Hlutdaw, which was a public council as distinguished from the Byedaik, consisted of four members known as Wungyis or Mingyis.[45] Occasionally the number was five or six, or even eight as under Mindon.[46] The Wungyis were the most powerful officials in the State. Their functions were legislative, executive and judicial.[47] In other words, they controlled every department of the State and, in fact, governed the State, subject always to the pleasure of the King.[48]

Each Wungyi had an assistant known as Wundauk. The Wundauks sat in the Hlutdaw, in a consultative capacity, having no vote. They gave their opinions, and might record their dissent from any measure that was proposed, but the Wungyis decided. The Wundauks, however, were frequently employed to carry into execution business of great public importance.[49]

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[45] U Tin, Myanma Min Okchokpon Sadan (Rangoon 1932), Part III, pp. 187-188. Wungyi = (bearer of) great burden. Mingyi = monarch, in modern sense, great minister of state, Judson's Burmese-English Dictionary (Rangoon 1953), p.738.

[46] H.Gouger, Personal Narrative of Two Years' Imprisonment in Burmah (London 1860), p.50; J. Crawfurd, Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava (London 1834), vol. II, p.137; Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States (Rangoon 1900), vol. II, Part 1, p.474.

[47] Lieut.-Gen. Albert Fytche, Burma Past and Present (London 1878), vol. 1, p.239.

[48] M.Symes, An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava (London 1800), p.308.

[49] Ibid.; Crawfurd, op.cit., vol. II, p.139; T.A.Trant, Two Years in Ava from May 1824 to May 1826 (London 1827), p.242; Fytche, op.cit., vol. I, p.240.

The King was the head of the Hlutdaw but on all ordinary occasions its meetings were presided over by whomsoever happened for the time to be the most influential of the four Wungyis.[50]

The Byedaik also consisted of four members known as Atwinwuns or Ministers of the Interior.[51] They were the King's privy counsellors. They had access to the King at all times - a privilege which the principal Wungyi did not enjoy. So their influence sometimes counteracted with success the views and wishes of the Wungyis.[52] Though not members of the Hlutdaw, the Atwinwuns appear to have attended the meetings of the Hlutdaw regularly in their capacity as private advisers to the King. This is clear from Thibaw's ameindaw or royal order of 1878, in which the King, having notified his intention to preside over the Hlutdaw, said:

> "when I go to the Hlutdaw, Ministers and Atwinwuns shall inform me of legal disputes among the people of the country and affairs of the State that need my attention."[53]

The Wungyis, the Wundauks and the Atwinwuns governed the State in their collective capacity. So far as their relations with the King were concerned, they were merely his creatures and the instruments for carrying out his orders. They could be removed from office at any time or subjected to corporal punishment for every dereliction

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[50] John Nisbet, Burma Under British Rule - and Before (Westminster 1901), vol. 1, p.152.

[51] Myanma Min Okchokpon Sadan (Rangoon 1933), Part IV, p.18.

[52] Symes, op.cit., pp. 308-309; Crawfurd, op.cit., vol. II, p.139; Trant, op.cit., pp. 242-243.

[53] Selections from the Records of the Hlutdaw (Rangoon 1889), p.14, compiled by Taw Sien Ko.

of duty. There are several cases on record of ministers being punished for negligence of duty. Thus Bodawpaya exposed the Wungyis to the sun in the palace-yard for several hours with pieces of silver round their necks,[54] while Bagyidaw sent all the members of the Hlutdaw, including the Atwinwuns, to the pillory.[55]

In addition to the officers mentioned above, there were numerous other officers who were associated with the Hlutdaw and the Byedaik in their capacities as messengers, clerks, heralds, surveyors, revenue officers, caretakers of the palace furniture, registrars of oath and masters of ceremonies.[56]

The provincial administration radiated from the Hlutdaw and the Byedaik. The Myowun or the provincial governor, who was subordinate only to the Hlutdaw, was vested with the entire charge of the province, civil, judicial military and fiscal.[57] His power was almost unlimited.[58] Generally speaking, he had the power of life and death.[59] But he was clearly instructed by the central government to use his power judiciously and not to take advantage of his position.[60]

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[54] H.Cox, Journal of a Residence in the Burman Empire (London 1821), p.311.

[55] Crawfurd, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 303, 496-497; H.Yule, A Narrative of the Mission sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855 (London 1858), p.244.

[56] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, vol. II, Part 1, pp. 472-476; Nisbet, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 157-160.

[57] Crawfurd, op.cit., vol. II, p.141.

[58] Trant, op.cit., p.244.

[59] Crawfurd, op.cit., vol. II, p.141.

[60] Selections from the Records of the Hlutdaw, p.55, Instructions to Myowuns and other District Officers.

The governorship was divided into townships, each in charge of an officer called Myothugyi.[61] He was also known by some other appellations, such as Shwehmu or Pawhmaing.[62] He was a very powerful officer. He had several villages under him. Each of these villages was under a Thugyi. The Thugyi had unlimited civil judicial power, and general criminal jurisdiction in his area in the same way as the Myothugyi in his township.[63] In fact, the whole village system centred round the Thugyi. As G.E.Harvey wrote, he "was more than a functionary, he was the head of society, and he set the tone".[64] The villager accepted his position not only as a matter of duty and obligation, he also accepted it as a matter of necessity. The country was so vast, the villages so scattered, and the roads so lonely and difficult that robbery was a common thing and, so, some sort of cohesion in terms of leadership and common front naturally provided the best means of self-protection. Moreover, the rapacity of the governors, which was almost traditional,[65] drove the villagers more and more to the protection of a common leader. Thus, in the course of time, the personal jurisdiction of the Thugyi over a villager grew so strong that wherever a man went he was liable to be followed and taxed by his original chief.[66]

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[61] Myo = a town, Thugyi = a headman, Myothugyi = head of a town or township. The word Myo was also applied to a province.

[62] Ma Kyan, "Village administration in Upper Burma During 1886-87", JBRS, vol. LII, Part II, December 1969, p.68.

[63] For details about the institutions of Myothugyi and Thugyi, see below, pp. 220-228, 265-269, 271-275.

[64] G.E.Harvey, British Rule in Burma, 1824-1942 (London 1946), p.24.

[65] In spite of the instructions from the central authority, the governors appear to have misused their authority. Even a King like Mindon could not do much to check the rapacity of the governors, Shway Yoe (Sir George Scott), The Burman: His Life and Notions (London 1882), p.66.

[66] Ma Mya Sein, Administration of Burma (Rangoon 1938), p.49.

Such, in brief, was the system of administration under the Kings. The British retained the system as a stop-gap arrangement. They allowed the Hlutdaw to discharge all its functions as usual, but under the control of General Prendergast and the presidency of Colonel Sladen.[67] The idea was to avoid, at least in theory, any "breach of continuity" in administration[68] so as to make people feel that the British occupation did not mean any radical change. Apart from this, pragmatism suggested that the retention of the Hlutdaw was the only course by which some sort of provisional arrangement could be made. There were numerous officials of the old government spread over a hundred thousand square miles. It was too early to think of reorganising and fitting this huge mass of officials into a British system of administration. All that could be done at this stage was to hold them as far as possible in their respective positions by bringing the direct influence of the Hlutdaw to bear upon them.

Simultaneously, on 1 December 1885, a proclamation was issued, which notified the termination of Thibaw's rule, gave lavish assurance to various sections of the Burmese community of British co-operation, and directed all the officers of the old government to perform their several duties, police, judicial or revenue, faithfully under the direction of the British Civil Officers.[69]

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[67] Cmd. 4887, p.3, Narrative of Military Operations enclosed with Government of India Letter, 16 July 1886.

[68] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.4.

[69] IMP, vol. 2768, pp. 176-177. Copies of the proclamation in English and Burmese are preserved with the Sladen Collection in the India Office Library.

Thirdly, the Mandalay authorities paid special attention to the pongyis[70] who were, in the words of Major Browne, "a gigantic power".[71] They were undoubtedly the most revered and powerful section in the community. The source of their influence and prestige lay in their role of guarding the teaching of the past, and of imparting to each new generation elementary knowledge of Theraveda Buddhism and of simple reading and writing. Besides this, the Shinpyu ritual, according to which every male Buddhist in his teens, even the King, entered the Sangha[72] and became a monk for a short time, gave them a unique status as the spiritual preceptors of the society as a whole. Thus the informal spiritual power wielded by the pongyis had had the effect of tempering the autocratic policy of the King, and cases of pongyis interceding before the King to save the lives of captured rebels or prisoners of war are numerous.[73] In fact, the power and prestige in which the pongyis were held by the people appear to have been more than enough to rouse the jealousy of the King.[74] The British were well aware of the position of the monks, and the Civil Officers of the Expeditionary Force were especially

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[70] Pongyis = monks. Most European observers have used the term 'priest' for 'pongyi'. But there was no church in Burma in the western sense of the term. The services rendered by pongyis to laymen were informal, sporadic and purely voluntary. They never acted as 'priests' mediating between man and any deity.

[71] Browne, op.cit., p.193. In 1886 there were over 13,000 pongyis in Mandalay, Taw Sein Ko, Burmese Sketches (Rangoon 1913), p.216.

[72] Sangha = Buddhist Order.

[73] P.Bigandet, The Life or Legend of Gaudama, the Bud ha of the Burmese (London 1880), vol. II, 3rd edition, p.309; E.M.Mendelson, "Buddhism and Politics in Burma", New Society, No. 38, 20 June 1963, p.8; Donald E.Smith, Religion and Politics in Burma (Princeton University Press 1965), p.33; G.E.Harvey, British Rule in Burma 1824-1942, p.26.

[74] Bodawpaya became jealous of the pongyis and attempted to seize some of the lands belonging to the Sangha, U Aung Than, "Relations Between the Sangha and State and Laity", JBRS, vol. XLVIII, June 1965, Part I, p.5.

instructed to do all that was possible to win the support of this powerful section. The instructions were:

> "Civil officers will make it a special object to secure the acceptance of British occupation by monks or pôngyis. To this end they will, where such a course may be proper, visit the pôngyis in the monasteries, invite them to meetings, persuade them to remain in their monasteries, and in every way protect the precincts of monasteries, pagodas &c., from treatment that may be contrary to Buddhist custom."[75]

Thus, when the British entered Mandalay they were particularly anxious not to offend the susceptibilities of the pongyis.[76] The proclamation of 1 December assured the pongyis that they would be allowed to carry on their religious duties, that the precincts of their monasteries and pagodas would be preserved and that their religion would remain the religion of the country. On 3 December Colonel Sladen visited the Thathanabaing[77] and told him that the British would respect Buddhist religion.[78] The Thathanabaing in his turn promised to work with the British, and sent out episcopal proclamations to all monks of the country, enjoining them to support all orders sent them by the Hlutdaw.[79] Besides this, on 11 December, he held a convocation of 300 pongyis, to whom he read minutes of his meeting with Colonel Sladen, which were unanimously approved.[80]

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[75] SC, Instructions to Civil Officers with the Expeditionary Force, 12 November 1885, p. 2, para 7.

[76] Browne, op.cit., p.193.

[77] Thathana = Religion, Baing = Ruler, Thathanabaing = Ruler or Head of Religion.

[78] IMP, vol. 2768, p.174. Diary of the Field Force.

[79] Ibid., p.174. See also, The Pioneer Mail, 16 December 1885, p.620, and Cmd 4614, 1886, p.260, Telegram from General Prendergast to Secretary of State, 9 December 1885.

[80] The Pioneer Mail, 23 December 1885, vol. XII, p.648.

Fourthly, the mighty Bohozi drum,[81] which was used to be beaten every three hours as a sign of the existence of the Government and was discontinued following the occupation of Mandalay, was now beaten in order to make people feel that the Government was still there, and that things were going all right.[82]

Last, and not least, as a measure of pacification, Burman labourers were employed for clearing out the Palace, carting rubbish, filling up swamps and the like on a daily payment basis.[83] The system became really popular as the Burmans were never in the habit of receiving the worth of their hire.[84] But money for this kind of work was very limited, and within a few days of their employment their wage was reduced to half.[85] Thus Major Browne wrote that "if we only had had the money to lay out in this way on our first arrival, much after trouble would have been warded off".[86]

These conciliatory measures undoubtedly produced a certain good effect. From official papers, and from some independent sources,

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[81] The drum was called Bohozi as it was placed on a white tower called the Bohozin which stood just within the eastern gate. One engineer took the dimensions of the drum, and calculated its weight as 89 tons. See Sir Herbert Thirkell White, A Civil Servant in Burma (London 1913), p.118; The Illustrated London News, 5 December 1885, No. 2433, vol. LXXXVII, p.581.

[82] Geary, op.cit., p.94; The Pioneer Mail, 9 December 1885, vol. XII, No. 23, p.591; Thirkell White, op.cit., pp. 118-119.

[83] IMP, vol. 2768, p.361, Diary of the Royal Engineers with the Expeditionary Force.

[84] In King Mindon's time an unskilled labourer got 4 annas per day, but at the time of the occupation of Mandalay only 1 anna, Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, vol. II, Part 1, p.166.

[85] When the Burman labourers were first employed on 8 December 1885 they were paid 8 annas (half a rupee) a head a day, but in three days' time this was reduced to 6, and a few days later to 4 annas, women 3 annas, IMP, vol. 2768, p.361, Diary of the Royal Engineers with the Expeditionary Force .

[86] Browne, op.cit., p.199.

it appears that a certain amount of normalcy was prevalent in the city of Mandalay, and even, although in a very limited sense, in one or two riverside towns, namely, Minhla and Taungdwingyi. At Minhla, the British Civil Officer was trying to introduce something like decent administration,[87] while at Taungdwingyi, Captain Raikes succeeded in persuading the people of several villages to lay down their arms, in getting submission of about a dozen Thugyis, and in making some administrative, judicial and revenue arrangements.[88] Up the river, the city of Mandalay was reported to have presented a better picture. The city was firmly held. People were reported to be returning to their homes and avocations.[89] The local officials were persuaded by the Hlutdaw to remain in their present offices.[90] Disarmament of the people was pressed vigorously;[91] several Burman officers from distant parts of the country came in and gave up their arms[92] and, within a few days of the disarmament proclamation, 20,000 rifles were delivered up to the

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[87] Nisbet, op.cit., vol. I, p.99.

[88] IMP, vol. 2768, pp. 256, 258, Diary of Capt. Raikes, Deputy Commissioner of Thayetmyo.

[89] Cmd. 4614, 1886, p.260, Telegram from General Prendergast to Secretary of State, 9 December 1885.

[90] PSCI, vol. 46, p.360, Memorandum by Sir Charles Bernard, Chief Commissioner, 25 December 1885.

[91] Cmd. 4614, 1886, p.260, Telegram from General Prendergast to Secretary of State, 6 December 1885.

[92] PSCI, vol. 46, p.1143, Further Proceedings of the Members of the Hlutdaw, 1 January 1886.

British.[93] Myowum Maung Pai-si of Mandalay was specially appointed to assist the Government in this matter.[94] In revenue matters also the Hlutdaw Government showed some success at this initial stage. Some 30,000 rupees came in as revenue from Pakangyi and Shwebo by the second week of December.[95] Thus the situation was, in the words of General Prendergast, on the whole "satisfactory and promising".[96] Thirkell White, who went to Mandalay by the middle of December 1885 as a junior officer, observed a "free and easy" atmosphere.[97] The Special Correspondent of the Pioneer Mail also gave a similar optimistic account from Mandalay in the following words:

> "Our followers go about unarmed and are never molested, and our presence here seems to be accepted quite as a matter of course. It is quite true that all the shops here have not yet been reopened, but day by day more people are returning ..... All along the river bank the Burmans sit from dawn to sunset exposing their wares for sale ..... in the main streets in the populous suburbs shops of every kind abound, and our men can buy everything they require."[98]

But the situation in Mandalay or in Taungdwingyi could not be taken as an index for the country as a whole. While the Mandalay authorities were doing their best to pacify the country, reports

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[93] The Times, 10 December 1885, p.5.

[94] Maung Tha Aung and Maung Mya Din, "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, 1941, vol. XXXI, Part II, p.83.

[95] MLEI, vol. 957, M 1443/1886, p.3.

[96] Cmd. 4614, 1886, p.260, Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State, 9 December 1885.

[97] Thirkell White, op.cit., p.127.

[98] The Pioneer Mail, 23 December 1885, p.649.

of disturbances were coming in from various parts of it.[99] The Burmese people were quickly realising that they were ruled by the Kalas, and that the Hlutdaw was "a mere cypher".[100]

To begin with the Irrawaddy Valley, Mandalay city itself appeared to be threatened from all sides, and by 2 December the police had brushed with the rebels or dacoits more than once at the outskirts of the city.[101] North of Mandalay, the country around Sheinmaga was dominated by Nga Yaing and his lieutenant Tha Pwe.[102] South of Mandalay, the region between Mandalay and Amarapura was so much disturbed that between 10 and 15 December one of the pickets on the Amarapura road was twice attacked.[103] Further south, the whole region east of the Irrawaddy between Myingyan and Pagan was infested by the powerful bands of Bo Cho[104] so much so that on 15 December a party of British troops was forced to retire on Ava after making a futile attempt to break through the enemy line towards Myingyan.[105] Close to the Lower Burma frontier, the country round Minhla was also disturbed, presumably by the followers of Bo Shwe, a hereditary Thugyi of Mindat, who had been harrying the

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[99] Cmd. 4887, 1886, p.54, Narrative of Military Operations.

[100] PSCI, vol. 46, p.1143, Further Proceedings of the Members of the Hlutdaw, 1 January 1886.

[101] IMP, vol. 2768, p.404, Telegram from Officer Commanding, Mounted Corps, to Asst. Adjutant and Quarter-Master General, 10 February 1886; Cmd. 4887, 1886, p.54, Narrative of Military Operations; The Pioneer Mail, 9 December 1885, p.592.

[102] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.64, Report from H.L. Eales, Deputy Commissioner, Shwebo, 3 September 1886.

[103] Cmd. 4887, 1886, pp. 54-55, Narrative of Military Operations.

[104] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (ublic), p.96, Report from Capt. G.S.Eyre, Deputy Commissioner, Pagan, 11 September 1886.

[105] Cmd. 4887, 1886, p. 57 , Narrative of Military Operations.

southern districts for the last twelve or thirteen years.[106]

The Chindwin Valley also presented an equally bad picture. Reports of anarchy and of a very strong gathering of rebels were coming in.[107] On the fall of Thibaw the places of the district officials were taken up by several persons. Thus the country of western Myedu passed into the hands of Nga Mya, the Thugyi of Inkoka, while the country west, east and south of Tabayin went to Nga Mye Gyi, Maung Aung Gyi and Hla U respectively.[108]

Such was the situation in Upper Burma by the middle of December 1885. Grattan Geary, who was in Upper Burma at this time, gave the following account:

> "Ten thousand dacoits were known to be already in movement. They were strong in the valleyof the Chinwin River. ..... To the east of the Irrawady, and to the north of our frontier, matters were not going well. The dacoits had been strengthened by the fugitives from the fort, on the left bank of the river opposite Minelah ..... On the western bank of the Irrawady, things were even more unsatisfactory; Minlakwa, the Governor-General of Minelah..... had retired with his soldiers on Salinmyo..... and was a source of alarm on that side. To the north of Mandalay the dacoits were also mustering..... Such was the general situation on the 13th December."[109]

The sporadic military operations undertaken by the Mandalay authorities during the first fifteen days of December 1885 were seriously handicapped by two great difficulties. First, a regular

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[106] Cmd. 4962, 1887, p.103, Letter from Government of India, No. 52, Public, 19 October 1886.

[107] Geary, op.cit., p.29. At the beginning of the 2nd week of December three Europeans, Messers Allen, Roberts and Monteure, who were in the employ of the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation, were killed up the Chindwin River.

[108] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.80, Report from W.N.Porter, District Officer, 25 September 1886.

[109] Geary, op.cit., pp. 29-31.

sabotage of telegraph line[110] prevented the authorities from taking any effective move against the rebels. Though the population was very small,[111] the area was vast, over 80,000 square miles, and military posts were few, only those holding the line of communication along the Irrawaddy. The distance between those posts was naturally wide, so much so that a quick communication between them was out of the question. With the limited number of troops available only a limited number of posts could be established. Consequently, a co-ordinated plan of operations based on a system of regular contact between posts, and posts and columns sent out inland could not be worked out. The Signalling Department of the Field Force established a heliographic station on the Mandalay Hill on 7 December.[112] But the maximum range it could command was only twelve miles. Besides this, visual signalling could at any time be obstructed by thick jungle, mists, and fogs.[113] Thus military operations could not be undertaken depending on visual signalling alone; special care was

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[110] Cmd. 4887, p. 54, Government of India Letter, 16 July 1886.

[111] It is not possible to give the exact number of population in Upper Burma at the time of the Annexation. There is no Burmese record on this subject. In the Census Report of 1891 a little over three million persons were returned as having been born in Upper Burma proper. In statistics taken for 106 villages in the Kyaukse district during 1890-91, it was found that there had been an increase in population of about 5% in five years (1886-1891). If this percentage is applied to the whole of Upper Burma proper the total population at the time of the Annexation would be just below three million. See Census of India, 1891, Imperial Series, vol. IX, Burma Report, vol. I (Rangoon 1892), p.178; SR, Kyaukse, 1890-91 (Rangoon 1892), p.24.

[112] IMP, vol. 2768, pp. 378, Report of the Signalling Operations of the Field Force, 9 February 1886.

[113] Ibid., p.379.

taken to protect the telegraph lines. A party of fifty sabres was, for example, sent out on 14 December to patrol the telegraph line through Myingyan and Pagan to Minhla.[114]

The second difficulty with which the Field Force was confronted from the very beginning was the lack of a proper system of land transport. The success of a column sent out depended to a large extent on its mobility which, in its turn, depended on an efficient transport system. But the army was almost without land transport, save for some 3,000 coolies serving as porters.[115] The coolie transport which was tried during the early days of December proved to be a failure. In fact, the Director of Transport had had the doubt from the beginning about the usefulness of the coolie transport in respect of mobility.[116] The large body of coolies, three times the fighting strength of the column equipped for seven days, failed to keep pace with the column while moving along a difficult terrain. The following report of a column which was sent out on 6 December 1885 points out the difficulty clearly:

> "The track, which led from village to village, was generally very rough. Troops and baggage could only march in single rank. This delayed the baggage considerably and in consequence, it, and the rear guard, did not arrive in camp until some hours after the

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[114] Cmd. 4887, 1886, p.55, Narrative of Military Operations vide Government of India Letter, 16 July 1886.

[115] IMP, vol. 2768, p.387, Letter from Director of Transport to the Asst. Adjutant-General of the Field Force, 14 January 1886. See also Durand, op.cit., vol. I, p.329.

[116] IMP, vol. 2768, p.388, Letter from Director of Transport to Asst. Adjutant-General of the Field Force, 12 February 1886.

> troops. These remarks are applicable to each day's proceedings."[117]

Another column sent out on 8 December reported a similar experience:

> "One or two muddy crossings, however, so delayed the baggage, that it did not arrive in camp until the next day."[118]

However, the transport difficulty was gradually overcome by procuring pack-animals.[119]

Indeed, the situation was appalling, perhaps the worst that any modern army could ever expect to be confronted with: a foreign land, covered with impenetrable jungle and hills, intersected by numerous rivers; no telegraphic communication and no system of land transport. The Burman, on the other hand, was fighting in his own land all of which was known and accessible to him. He also knew how to prepare an entrenchment, erect a stockade or construct an abattis, while marching, shooting, riding and swimming were common things to him.[120] Above all, he never bothered about commissariat; at one end of his musket he carried his mat to sleep on, at the other his cooking-pot; round his loins was bound a wallet of the rice which, with a few chilies, composed his simple fare.[121]

Before passing on to Sir Charles Bernard's administration it will be convenient to explain the root causes of Burmese unrest. First,

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[117] MLEI, vol. 959, M 5837/1886, Diary of the Field Force, vide General Prendergast's Letter, 23 December 1885.

[118] Ibid., vide General Prendergast's Letter, 29 December 1885.

[119] Browne, op.cit., p.191.

[120] General Sir H.N.D.Prendergast, "Burman Dacoity and Patriotism and Burman Politics", Asiatic Quarterly Review, New Series, vol. 5, 1893, p.273.

[121] Yule, op.cit., p.250; J.J.Snodgrass, Narrative of the Burmese War (London 1827), p.76.

it should be noted that Thibaw's deposition was not an ordinary political episode. It was more than a mere occupation of a country by overthrowing its ruler; it was a revolution in itself. It shook the entire socio-political-religious pattern of the country to its foundations, and let loose many a violent force which thoroughly upset the British plan to follow up their easy conquest by a policy of quick pacification. The King was the source of religious advancement, of social integration, and of political glory; he was, in short, the living symbol of national pride.[122] This was, however, a centripetal outlook, which grew over centuries of isolation, there being no opportunity to see any real superiority in anything from the outside world.[123] But the pride in anything national and traditional, and the veneration for the King who was the source of such pride was complete. It was this national vanity which preserved among the Burmese people a vivid recollection of the period when they were a conquering race, very formidable to Shans, Kachins, Assamese, Thais and other neighbouring races, and enabled them to forget the reverses which they had suffered from British and Indian troops.

The depth of Burmese sentimental attachment to the King is, however, to be judged by the traditional pattern of kingship with the King having near-absolute power. The King's position was

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122 Donald E.Smith has given an excellent account of the King's traditional socio-political-religious role, op.cit., pp. 20-31.

123 Daw Mi Mi Khaing, "People of the Golden Land", Perspective of Burma, p.14, an Atlantic Supplement (New York 1958).

buttressed by the Hindu concept of royalty associated with the mythical Manu,[124] as well as by the Hindu cosmological idea of the Meru-centric universe.[125] The King was, according to the people's notion, a divinity in human form, while his palace, the centre of the universe, symbolising Mount Meru. Thus to the Burmese people the palace precincts were very sacred. True, this status of the King gave him near-absolute power. But this power was rationalised by two things. First, there was the Buddhist Doctrine of Kamma[126] which provided it with a powerful religious sanction.[127]

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[124] Manu according to Hindu mythology, was the first king of the world. His famous Code presents the King as a deity in human form. It also emphasises the need for the King's association with the Brahmanical elements both for the ministerial and ritualistic purposes. The role of the Brahmins during the coronation is an example of the impact of Hindu concept upon Burmese kingship. See The Law of Manu, translated by G.Bühler (Oxford 1886), p.217; D. Mackenzie Brown, The White Umbrella: Indian Political Thought from Manu to Gandhi (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1953), p.27; Yi Yi, "Life at the Burmese Court Under the Konbaung Kings", JBRS, vol. XLIV, 1961, Part I, p.85.

[125] Mount Meru is considered to be the centre of the earth, surrounded by seven concentric ranges of mountains round which revolve the sun, moon and stars. Beyond them there is a vast ocean in which are situated four great islands in the direction of the four cardinal points from Mount Meru. The southern island is called Zambudipa where men live. See Yule, op.cit., p.237; Shway Yoe, op.cit., pp. 88-93; E. Sarkisyanz, Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution (The Hague 1965), pp. 82-83; Dr. Ba Han, "Burmese Cosmogony and Cosmology", JBRS, June 1965, vol. XLVIII, Part I, pp. 12-13.

[126] The Doctrine of Kamma (Deeds), broadly speaking, is that the present condition of every sentient being is determined by the aggregate of its actions in previous existences, E. Forchammer, The Jardine Prize: an essay on the sources and development of Burmese law (Rangoon 1885), p.60.

[127] U Kyaw Thet, "Continuity in Burma", Perspective of Burma, p.20, an Atlantic Supplement.

The King was rich and powerful, because his good deeds in previous existences were numerous so as to give him great power and wealth.[128] The King was sometimes cruel and high-handed, but his cruelty and high-handedness were justified not only by pragmatic demands of the society[129] but also by the victim's Kamma in previous existences.[130] So people never envied his power and wealth, nor did they hate him for his cruelty; he was, indeed, an outstanding example of merit and reward.[131]

Secondly, the King's position was also rationalised by the popular tradition of the King being a Bodhisattva- a future Buddha - whose only aspiration would be to liberate all living beings from Samsâra.[132] Traditions record from time to time the prophecies of Gautama Buddha about the emergence of a King destined to be a

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[128] All Burmese Kings believed this. Thus Bodawpaya in an ameindaw or royal order of 1795 claimed to have attained the noble kingship because of the Kutho (merit) acquired in past existences, Myanma Min Okchokpon Sadan (Rangoon 1932), Part II, p.62. Mindon in an ameindaw of 1853 claimed that he, having in the former state of existence accomplished all the duties of religion, had become the Supreme Monarch, Yule, op.cit., p.363.

[129] Punishment inflicted in a right way is considered to be essential for the happiness of all people, Buhler, The Law of Manu, pp. 218-219. Thus, many Burmans thought that the massacre which took place at Thibaw's accession in 1878 was justifiable on the grounds of State necessity, Geary, op.cit., p.325.

[130] Forchammer, op.cit., p.59.

[131] Dr. Thaung, "Burmese Kingship in Theory and Practice Under the Reign of King Mindon", JBRS, vol. XLII, December 1959, Part II, p.173.

[132] Samsâra = world.

Bodhisattva.[133] The Kyanzittha legend provides the best example of this.[134]

Thus the Burmese people could not conceive of a religion without the King as its Defender.[135] When Thibaw mintayagyi was forcibly taken away by the Kalas it not only broke the hearts of many, it also made the people at large feel that their religion together with their national identity was in danger.[136] Buddhism was so closely interwoven with the national culture that its extinction simply meant the extinction of national identity itself.[137] The Burmese reaction at Thibaw's deportation was, therefore, logical.

Even in Lower Burma, thirty years of British rule could not eradicate the feeling for the monarchy in spite of conspicuous material development. The people there seem to have been proud of the fact that at least a Burmese King was ruling somewhere.[138] The Europeans in Lower Burma were well aware of this feeling.[139]

If to the laity Thibaw's deposition was a question of religion and national identity, to the pongyis it was more than that; to them it was a question of the existence of the Sangha itself. The

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[133] The Glass Palace Chronicle of the Kings of Burma, translated by Pe Maung Tin and G.H.Luce (London 1923), pp. 7, 29-30.

[134] In several Inscriptions (Shwezigon Pagoda, Mon and Shwesandaw Pagodas) King Kyanzittha (1084-1112) is presented as an ideal King destined to be a Bodhisattva, as foretold by Lord Buddha, Epigraphia Birmanica, vol. I, Part II, pp. 112-129, 146, 167. King Mindon also wished to attain "to deity" by assiduously practising "all the duties incumbent on Kings", Yule, op.cit., p.363, Mindon's ameindaw of 24 April 1853.

[135] Smeaton, op.cit., p.4; Geary, op.cit., p.73.

[136] I.P.Minayeff, Travels in and Diaries of India & Burma, translated by Hirendranath Sanyal (Calcutta, 1962), p.127; Taw Sein Ko, op.cit., p.50.

[137] Mendelson, "B uddhism and Politics in Burma", New Society, p.8; Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice, p.12.

[138] Smeaton, op.cit., pp.4-5; John Stuart, Burma Through the Centuries (London 1910), second ed., p.183; C.J.F.S.Forbes, British Burma and its people being sketches of native manners, customs, and religion (London 1878), p.325. Forbes was an officer in British Burma.

[139] E.D.Cuming, In the Shadow of the Pagoda (London 1897), p.206.

King not only built monasteries, pagodas and shrines, and fed the *pongyis* regularly, he also protected the *Sangha* in every possible way, namely, by punishing heresy, settling doctrinal and organisational differences and so on.[140] Now the King was gone. The existence of the *Sangha* was at stake. The British would not accept responsibility for protecting it because their policy regarding religion was one of non-interference. They had followed the same policy in Lower Burma. The *pongyis* of Upper Burma were aware of this, and this is why they became worried.[141] The result of British refusal to recognise the Buddhist Ecclesiastical Code in Lower Burma was summed up by Colonel E.B.Sladen in the following words:

> "the power of the priesthood to regulate church affairs is almost nil - their influence for good has vastly deteriorated, and Buddhism throughout British Burma is broken up into numerous sects and schisms, without and beyond all ecclesiastical control. The worst of it is, that the members of all these sects divide themselves socially as well as religiously, and the domestic relations of life have in many cases been materially disconcerted..."[142]

The *Thathanabaing*'s anxiety was to prevent a similar result in Upper Burma.

But the Gospel of non-violence could not be expected to do what *Jihad* and crusade had done in Islam and Christianity respectively.[143]

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[140] In 1871 Mindon convened at Mandalay the Fifth Great Buddhist Council in order to produce an authoritative Pali version of the Buddhist Tripitaka scriptures.

[141] Grattan Geary had an interview with the *Thathanabaing* in December 1885, in which the latter expressed his deep concern for religion, *op.cit.*, pp. 105-109.

[142] *SC*, vol. 9, Sladen's Report, "The Present Political Situation in Burma", pp. 60-61.

[143] *Jihad* = holy war in Islam (Religion of the Muslims).

This is why large-scale pongyi participation in the resistance movement which began following the Third-Anglo Burmese War is not recorded anywhere. But, as events were to show, numerous cases of pongyi participation on an individual basis were reported.[144] In fact, this was not unprecedented. There is evidence of this in the resistance movement which followed the British annexation of Pegu in 1852.[145] Apart from the anxiety for religion and the Sangha, there seem to be some other explanations. First, it was not unlikely that some of the pongyis joined the rebellion when they saw that the Kala soldiers chased and violated their women, robbed their people and damaged their monasteries.[146]

Secondly, hundreds of pongyis, who had so long depended on the laity for food, suffered because of unrest and the resultant economic dislocation. Many who used to live in the Kyaungs or monasteries of the towns were obliged to go back to their villages to get the means of living.[147] But the situation in the villages was no better. It was not at all surprising if the Gospel of non-violence failed to prevent some of them from resorting to unlawful acts for the bare necessity of survival.

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[144] See below, pp.150,156-157.

[145] Some time after the annexation of Pegu two men, having come down to Bassein from Ava, raised a large following with the help of a pongyi, The British Burma Gazetteer (Rangoon 1880), vol. I, p. 487; John F.Cady, A History of Modern Burma (Ithaca, New York 1958), p.53.

[146] The Thathanabaing told Grattan Geary that he heard complaints, especially from the districts, that the soldiers damaged and defaced the monasteries, oppressed the people, and were guilty of bad conduct to women, op.cit., pp. 108-109. The Russian Traveller Minayeff also wrote about the bad conduct of the soldiers during the first few months of the occupation of Mandalay (see below, p.129)

[147] Geary, op.cit., p.105.

Thirdly, some of the pongyis may have had high political ambition too. King Dhammazedi in the fifteenth century was formerly a pongyi, while in the eighteenth century a Mon pongyi was raised to the throne of Pegu and a Burmese pongyi occupied the throne of Ava for a few days before he was executed by Bodawpaya.[148]

The unrest also gathered momentum from the existing political condition of the country. Upper Burma on the eve of British occupation appeared to be very unsettled. The main reason was that King Thibaw, as we have seen,[149] was from the beginning a puppet in the hands of Queen Supayalat. "The harridan queen", in the words of Shway Yoe, "kept him in most humble subjection."[150] This personal influence was conveniently utilised in the political sphere through a ministerial intrigue in which the principal figure was the Taingda Mingyi. Thus, victim of a petticoat clique, Thibaw could not be otherwise than helpless. The most serious effect of such a state of things was a growing sense of insecurity among the officials, particularly those holding high posts. As a general rule, the high office-bearers, namely, the ministers and governors, held office during the pleasure of the King, and their tenure of office could be tragic as well as short.[151] There were, for example, sometimes half a dozen district

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[148] G.E.Harvey, History of Burma (London 1925), New impression 1967, pp. 117-118, 215, 263; Symes, op.cit., pp. 95-97.

[149] See above, pp. 18-19.

[150] Shway Yoe (Scott), The Burman, His Life and Notions (London 1882), p.457.

[151] Harvey, British Rule in Burma, 1824-1942, p. 23.

governors in a year.[152] This senseof insecurity became deeper and deeper in a growing atmosphere of intrigue and corruption. Thus patronage was arbitrarily used so as to please a favourite minister whose support was indispensible. Consequently, the governors of the districts made full use of their large civil, judicial, military and fiscal powers to amass as much wealth as possible within the shortest possible time.[153] The impact of this was disastrous. The confidence of the people was gradually shaken by a corresponding weakening of the hold of the governors over the country as a whole. So bad did affairs ultimately become that in the closing days of Thibaw's reign the authority of the central government did not extend much beyond the district of Mandalay and the immediate vicinity of the main channels of communication.[154]

When the King was weakened and the control of the central government over the country as a whole was loose, every scion of the Royal family, who could see a certain chance of success, naturally became ambitious to seize power. This is the reason why nearly each succession was followed by the killing of some members of the Royal house. The survivors naturally fled "to open rebellion as affording

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[152] Fielding Hall, The Soul of a People, p.81.

[153] Prior to Mindon's reign the officials received no regular salary but were paid by a certain percentage of the dues and fees collected by them from their respective areas. Mindon arranged to give the officials fixed salaries in order to check the practice of extortion. But the salaries were never paid punctually so that the old system continued to exist. See Nisbet, op.cit., vol. I, p.156; Yule, op.cit., Private journal of Arthur Phayre, p.xxxvii; Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, vol. II, Part 1, p.413.

[154] PGLIB, vol. 84, p.1164, Government of India Letter No. 52, 19 October 1886. In fact, the central government was never very strong because of the vast distances of many of the towns from Mandalay, the entire want of good roads and the difficulties of travelling by jungle tracks for the greater part of each year, Fielding Hall, The Soul of a People, pp. 53-54; Nisbet, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 153-154.

the best chance of safety."[155] As there was no law of succession,[156] each of these princes could claim himself as a legitimate candidate for the throne, and could fairly justify his act by pleading that his successful rival on the throne had endeavoured to put him and his relations to death. The people had no reason to disbelieve him because they knew what happened at each succession. Thus traditionally they had been in the habit of supporting one minlaung[157] or another. The conspiracy of the Myingun Prince, Thibaw's forty-two year old half-brother, to dethrone Thibaw in 1885 taking advantage of his weak rule, provides a good example of the traditional power struggle in the pre-annexation period.[158]

The British were from the beginning aware of the danger which could arise from the presence of the princes of the blood royal. This is why General Prendergast had deported five such princes to Rangoon at the earliest opportune moment.[159] But several others were still free, of whom the most formidable were the Myinzaing Prince, twenty-year old son of Mindon,[160] Prince Maung Hmat Kyi, a

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155 Gouger, op.cit., p.100.

156 Alaungpaya (1752-1760) left instructions that his sons should all succeed in turn, but Bodawpaya (1772-1819) changed this, wishing to see his eldest son on the throne. Mindon (1853-1878), however, nominated his brother, the Kanaung Prince, as Einshemin or heir-apparent, but the latter was killed by Mindon's sons, the Myingun Prince and the Nyaung Oke Prince, in 1866.

157 Minlaung = a pretender to the throne.

158 The Myingun Prince was born in 1843, his mother being a second rank queen. In 1866 the Myingun Prince fled to a British asylum after attempting his father's life and killing his uncle, the Kanaung Prince. In 1882 he escaped to a French asylum at Pondicherry. Since March 1885 he had been desperately trying to persuade the British to help him against Thibaw. See U Ya Gyaw, Myanma Maha Mingala Mingandaw (Mandalay 1905), p.241; SC, the Myingun Prince's letters to Sladen, dated 19 March, 28 May, 19 June, 22 October 1885; Harvey, "The Conquest of Upper Burma", The Cambridge History of India, vol. VI, p.436.

159 Cmd. 4614, 1886, p.260.

160 The Myinzaing Prince's mother was a minor queen, U Ya Gyaw, op.cit., p.243.

thirty-five year old cousin of Thibaw,[161] and the Choungwa Princes Yan Naing and Yan Baing, two young grandsons of Mindon. These princes were active almost immediately after the occupation of Mandalay. As events were to show, within a short time each of them enlisted a following from amongst the ex-officials, the disbanded soldiery and the disaffected generaly.

The disbanded soldiery appeared to be one of the most formidable elements of support for the princes of the blood royal. Thibaw's soldiers, as we have seen,[162] were 20,000 at most. According to the calculation of General Prendergast, 1,076 Burmans became casualties in the courseof the advance up the Irrawaddy,[163] although the official history of the war gives a figure far below that.[164] Of the rest, some hundreds were disbanded, and many more escaped to the jungle with their arms and ammunition intact.[165] The proclamation of 1 December 1885 gave no assurance of amnesty to these men who, as most contemporary observers pointed out, formed the hard core of the anti-British elements.[166] These men had no national funds for their maintenance and no assurance that their services

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[161] Prince Maung Hmat Kyi's father was the Kanaung Prince. But Maung Hmat did not have much standing in the palace because his mother was a concubine, U ya Gyaw, op.cit., p.248.

[162] See above, p.30.

[163] Colonel Henry M. Vibart, The Life of General Sir Harry N.D. Prendergast (London 1914), p.294.

[164] History of the Third Burmese War, Period 1, p.39.

[165] Cmd. 4962, p.81; PSCI, vol. 46, p.1128.

[166] I.P.Minayeff, Travels in and Diaries of India & Burma, translated by Hirendranath Sanyal (Calcutta), pp. 126-127, 130, 138, 141; Dr. Marks, Forty Years inBurma (London 1917), p.228; Durand, op.cit., vol. I, p.328; The Times, 8 January 1886, p.5; The Pioneer Mail, 13 January 1886, P.41.

would not be required by another King. Thus they "were thrown upon their military instincts for their bread". Apart from the economic factor, these men had no reason to be afraid of the British, for they had not been struck any blow. At least one or two decisive battles were needed to give adequate impression of British power.[167] In this connection, Sir Alfred Lyall has given a very impressive analogy:

> "In 1849 we annexed the Punjab after two campaigns and several fierce battles. In 1856 Oudh was annexed without a shot fired. Thereafter, when the Sepoy mutiny broke out in 1857, the Sikhs rallied to our standard, while Oudh rose against us in almost unanimous revolt."[168]

The ease and rapidity with which the conquest was achieved had not only affected Thibaw's organised soldiers, they had also affected his levies - bands of men raised hastily for the defence of the Kingdom. These men became rebels almost as soon as they fancied themselves to be soldiers.[169]

The unrest of the eighties should also be viewed against the general economic condition of the country. Generally speaking, Thibaw's reign presented a better picture as far as the statistics of external trade were concerned.[170] Apart from this, every Burman house was a shop, where something or another was always on sale.[171] The people had no reason to be unhappy, because life was simple, and

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[167] PGLIB, vol. 84, p.1164; A. Conservative, "Our Task in Burma", The Fortnightly Review, vol. XLI, New Series, 1887, London, p.377.

[168] Sir Alfred Lyall, The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava (London 1905), p.125.

[169] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Part 1, vol. 1, p.119.

[170] See above, p.35.

[171] Geary, op.cit., p.79.

through all the changing fortunes of their history they maintained this simplicity.[172] True, they had to pay various taxes, dues and fees, and they had quite often been subjected to extortion by the local officials. But as long as there was no general calamity which could push the country to the verge of starvation, the Burmese people could not care less for taxation and extortion. Their happy temperament, contented disposition, and jocund spirits enabled them to ignore many an inevitable ill to which mankind is liable.[173]

But the last two years of Thibaw's reign were a very bad time for the Burmese people. There were two successive unfavourable rice seasons.[174] Usually Upper Burma with a paucity of rainfall could hardly produce as much rice as was needed to feed her people, and she had steadily imported rice from British Burma. But in 1884 and 1885 the quantity of rice imported far exceeded that of any of the previous years.[175] In 1884 there was almost a famine situation.[176] In 1885 a complete failure of the crops over a tract stretching from sixty miles above Mandalay down to within sixty miles of the British border was reported.[177] To the Burman who was instinctively averse

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[172] Dr. Maung Maung, Burma in the Family of Nations (Amsterdam 1956), p.16.

[173] Major-General A. Ruxton MacMahon, Far Cathay and Farther India (London 1893), p.56.

[174] ARB, 1885-1886, Part II, p.37. Charles Lee Keeton in his recent work entitled King Thebaw and the Ecological Rape of Burma (Delhi 1974) says that there was an increasing dryness during the reigns of Mindon and Thibaw due to Deforestation caused by large scale export of timber between 1862 and 1875 (Appendix B).

[175] 87,127 tons and 96,363 tons of rice were imported in 1884 and 1885 respectively as against 53,323 tons in 1878, 41,837 tons in 1879, 5,677 in 1880, 5,243 in 1881, 39,764 in 1882 and 37,840 tons in 1883. See ARB, 1885-86, Part II , p.27.

[176] Geary, op.cit., p.50.

[177] PSCI, vol. 45, p.922, Bernard's demi-official to Durand, 15 September 1885.

to the idea of frugality,[178] a crop-failure was a severe blow, while the effects of taxation and extortion, which in ordinary times could be ignored, began to tell upon him heavily.

Under this situation the war pushed him on to the point of starvation. Before the war actually began, the King's emergency war contribution had already left hundreds of people virtually penniless. Every householder in Minbu and other towns was called upon to pay a contribution of from 5 to 10 rupees to the Government.[179] As every one was on the brink of ruin, this addition to the public burdens left the inhabitants of those places without an anna.[180] Now the war itself completely ruined the country's economy both directly and indirectly.

As to the direct effects of the war, it brought the trade along the Irrawaddy,[181] which was the main line of British advance, to a standstill. It was on the security of the Irrawaddy that the consolidation of the recent conquest depended. Consequently, military posts were established at intervals along the banks of the river,

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[178] The reasons usually held to explain why the Burmese people were averse to the idea of frugality are: (i) the danger of being squeezed or robbed, (ii) the desire to acquire benefits in the next existence by spending money on works of religious merit, (iii) extravagant form of characteristic lightheartedness and, (iv) a carelessness of human life and suffering from the belief that personal misfortune in this world was the direct result of faults committed in a previous existence. See SR, Mandalay, 1892-93 (Rangoon 1894), pp. 19, 28; SR, Sagaing, 1893-1900 (Rangoon 1903), p.93; SR, Kyaukse, 1890-91 (Rangoon 1892), p.17; Nisbet, op.cit., vol. I, p.155; Shway Yoe, op.cit., p.67; Fielding Hall, The Soul of a People, pp. 107-111; Scott, Burma As it was, As it is and As it will be, pp. 109-110; Sir Lepel Griffin, "The Burman and his Creed", The Fortnightly Review, vol. XLVIII,1890,pp.662-663.

[179] Geary, op.cit., p.65. In 1798 a call of thirty-three and one-third licals of silver was made from every house, The British Burma Gazetteer, vol.I, p.447.

[180] Anna = one-sixteenth of a rupee.

[181] 75% of the country's trade was carried on this route. The Sittang and the Salween routes carried a considerable quantity of teak timber, no doubt, but

which naturally became the targets of the anti-British elements. The inadequacy of troops and, therefore , of military posts at the initial stage of the conquest left considerable areas in between the posts virtually at the mercy of these elements, either rebels or dacoits. These areas being their gathering centres suffered the brunt of military operations from time to time.[182] In fact, over the entire line of communication, save the areas which could be controlled directly from the scattered military bases, a state of insecurity prevailed. As Grattan Geary observed

> "The military posts dotted at long intervals along the banks of the river make no pretence of controlling the country at large."[183]

The official papers also record that the British authority was felt only within the range of the rifles and gunboats.[184] Under this situation normal commercial pursuits were out of the question. If any daring businessman ventured to land his merchandise at any river-side business centre beyond a military post, and disposed of it without trouble, he was lucky.[185]

The indirect effects of the war were equally disastrous. The forests, mines and oil wells of Upper Burma could not promise such output as to provide any considerable number of Burmans with

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very little other merchandise. A certain amount of trade was also carried on pack-bullocks or on elephants, or on men's backs, across the borders of the Thayetmyo, Kyaukpyu, Tavoy, Amherst and Toungoo districts.

[182] Geary, op.cit., pp. 49, 51.

[183] Ibid., pp. 74-75.

[184] Cmd. 4690, 1886, p.5.

[185] Geary, op.cit., p.74.

employment.[186] Consequently, every year during the harvests a large number of Upper Burmans crossed the frontier into British Burma, worked as labourers, and returned home at the end of the busy season.[187] The war deprived these men of a highly paid vocation.

Thus the economic dislocation was complete so that at many places people were reported to be eating the roots of the palm-tree, the refuse of the teel-seed, and even the pariah dogs.[188] The scarcity of food greatly accentuated the troubles in Upper Burma, and an anti-British stand provided a powerful incentive for pillaging the villages which were considered to be collaborating with the British. Foraging parties were sent out to neighbouring villages to get what they could lay their hands upon. It was, indeed, a vicious circle; there was dacoity because there was scarcity of food, and dislocation of trade; and because of the prevalence of dacoity there was no gathering in of the crops and the revival of trade.

The anarchy and confusion which followed Thibaw's deportation has also been ascribed to certain 'predatory instincts' of Burmese character. It was held that the Burmese people had a traditional love of desultory fighting, raiding, gang-robbery and similar kinds of excitement.[189] It was also held that dacoity was a social

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[186] Geary, op.cit., p.303.

[187] The British Burma Gazette, vol. I, p.444; Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice, pp. 89-90.

[188] Geary, op.cit., pp. 51-52.

[189] Cmd. 4962, p.103, Government of India Letter No. 52, 19 October 1886.

institution,[190] that female members of the society were a powerful source of inspiration to the dacoits for their daring exploits[191] and that successful dacoits were heroes of story and song.[192] There are, however, no available Burmese sources which provide evidence for these assertions. But one thing is certain, that the country was infested with numerous dacoits and freebooters, especially during the last two years of Thibaw's reign. This is clear from some available Burmese and English sources. Thus, in September 1884 alone, some 235 dacoits were captured by the Burmese authorities between Mandalay and Bhamo.[193] In October the same year the Wun of Alonmyo in the Upper Chindwin sent four dacoits to Mandalay for trial.[194] Towards the end of 1885 some one thousand dacoits were captured from different parts of the Kingdom.[195] All these suggest that, during the last two years of Thibaw's reign, there was a great deal of dacoity and robbery, presumably owing to the bad economic situation.

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[190] Major-General R.D.Ardagh, "The Burmese Annexation", Journal of the East India Association, vol. XVIII, London, 1886, p.103; Geary, op.cit., p.46.

[191] Sir Charles Bernard, "Burma: The New Province", The Scottish Geographical Magazine, 1888, vol, IV, p.72; Prendergast, "Burman Dacoity and Patriotism and Burman Politics", op.cit., p.276.

[192] Cmd. 4962, 1887, p.82, General White's letter to Adjutant General in India, 18 August 1886.

[193] J.A.Farrer, "The Burmese War", The Gentleman's Magazine, vol. CCLX, 1886, p.64. Farrer was an officer in British Burma.

[194] Selections from the Records of the Hlutdaw, p.185, letter from Alonmyo Wun to the Hlutdaw, 10th waxing of Thadingyut (October). In the same letter the Wun wrote that he had information about further nine dacoits of whom he captured two and the rest he was searching for.

[195] Geary, op.cit., p.326.

The Burmese authorities in many cases had shown extreme severity in punishing dacoits. According to Grattan Geary, when atrocities were chargeable, the dacoit was executed and his body was suspended on a cross of bamboos as an example to all evil-doers.[195A] This is corroborated by the account of Alfred Rimmel who was an officer of the steam-boat company on the banks of the Irrawaddy. The following extract from Rimmel's account, which was published in The Illustrated London News with a sketch, is worth noting:

> "We sometimes see horrible sights on the Irrawaddy when we have passed the British frontier ..... The mode of execution is crucifixion; and I send a Sketch of a sickening sight I have just seen. It is very common here..... He [the crucified man whose sketch was sent] would seem to have been condemned for robbery, and this, I think, is always punished with crucifixion..... There is sometimes a row of men who are crucified side by side...."[196]

But in spite of such exemplary punishment, the country continued to be infested with dacoits. According to some contemporary observers, this state of affairs was to some extent the result of association of some members of the Hlutdaw with noted freebooters. The Taingda Mingyi, for example, is said to have received a handsome revenue from the robber chief Bo Po Tok.[197] Whether the Taingda

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[195A] Geary, op.cit., p.48. When not aggravated by atrocities dacoity used to be punished generally by fine. The dacoit was, however, tattooed on the wrist with the words 'Take care, Be good' and then set free with the warning that if caught a second time his head would be chopped off. See Geary, op.cit., pp. 48, 326; Lt. Col. F.Cochran, The Hampshire Men (37th regiment) in Upper Burmahin 1889 (London 1890).

[196] The Illustrated London News, 5 December 1885, No. 2433, vol. LXXXVII, p.581.

[197] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Part I, vol. 1, p.120. See also Harvey, British Rule in Burma, 1824-1942, p.21.

Mingyi really shared the loot with the dacoits was not decisively proved. But the rumour was so strong that it created a sensation in both Upper and Lower Burma and, perhaps, discredited Thibaw's government to a certain extent. Journalist Moylan, Visitor Grattan Geary and Traveller Minayeff - all heard and recorded this in their accounts.[198] In Lower Burma the rumour seems to have produced a violent reaction, where the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce criticised the Taingda Mingyi's appointment as a member of the Hlutdaw by General Prendergast in very strong terms.[199]

Again, it seems that some high provincial officials were in league with the dacoits so that the latter had little or no difficulty to remain at large. Laurie mentioned this in his Report on the settlement operations in the Mandalay district during 1892-93. He wrote that a dacoit was executed only when he failed to conciliate the authorities.[200] This seems to be corroborated by a letter from the Shwe-pyi-yan-aung-myin-wun to the Hlutdaw, in which the latter wrote that certain town authorities refused to surrender to him some twenty dacoits.[201] No wonder many such dacoits managed to buy their freedom by conciliating the authorities. So, when the

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198 See The Times, 12 December 1885, p.5: 14 December 1885, p.5: 2 January 1886, p.5; Geary, op.cit., pp. 39, 221; Minayeff, op. cit., p.184.

199 The Times, 12 December 1885, p.5.

200 SR, Mandalay, p.28.

201 Selections from the Records of the Hlutdaw, pp. 171-172. The letter of the Shwe-pyi-yan-aung-myin-wun, who seems to have been a cavalry officer during Thibaw's reign, is undated. The letter contains names of these twenty dacoits.

war came, and anarchy and confusion followed Thibaw's deportation, brigandage, which was not far below the surface, became quickly widespread. The life and property of the people became so insecure that each village appointed its leader to protect itself against another village or against group banditry in general.[202] As an additional precautionary measure, every village surrounded itself with impenetrable hedges of prickly pear or with matted rows of dry brambles and thorns.[203]

Thus we see that the unrest which followed King Thibaw's deportation was not only a struggle for national honour and for religion, it was also a struggle for existence and for petty personal interests in general.

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[202] Nisbet, op.cit., vol. I, pp. 170-171; Alleyne Ireland, The Province of Burma (Cambridge 1907), vol. I, p.47.

[203] History of the Third Burmese War, Period 1, p.53.

Chapter Three

SIR CHARLES BERNARD: BRITISH POLICY AND BURMESE RESPONSE

Bernard, the Chief Commissioner of Lower Burma, arrived at Mandalay on 15 December 1885 and assumed charge of civil administration.[1] He was accompanied by five civil and police officers, namely, Colonel T. Lowndes, Captain C.H.E.Adamson, G.H.S.Carter, M.J.Chisholm and H.Thirkell White.[2] These officers formed the nucleus of future civil administration in Upper Burma.[3] Bernard's action seems to have been a little premature for, according to the Viceroy's instructions to General Prendergast issued on the eve of the Expedition, that officer was expected to go to Mandalay and assume civil control after annexation had been decided.[4] Perhaps the exigencies of the pacification necessitated an early action. However, the situation about this time turned out to be so bad that

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[1] Bernard began his service in the Punjab in 1858. He served in India in various capacities until 1880 when he became Chief Commissioner of British Burma. His title as Chief Commissioner for Upper Burma as well was not settled until 25 September 1886, when a proclamation was issued whereby the Viceroy, in exercise of the powers conferred upon him by the Statute 17 and 18 Vic., cap. 77, section 3, took Upper Burma under his immediate authority and management with the sanction and approbation of the Secretary of State, and placed it under the administration of the Chief Commissioner of Lower Burma, who was styled the Chief Commissioner of Burma. See Cmd 4962, 1887, Further Correspondence in continuation of 4887, p.137.

[2] Sir Herbert Thirkell White, A Civil Servant in Burma (London 1913), pp. 114-115. Thirkell White served as Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Burma for several years. He became Lieutenant-Governor of Burma in 1905.

[3] Ibid., p.115.

[4] Cmd. 4614, 1886, Correspondence relating to Burmah since the accession of King Theebaw in October 1878, p.255, Viceroy's Instructions, 3 November 1885.

complete withdrawal of military control did not appear feasible. Some ten thousand 'dacoits' were reported to be in movement.[5] Bernard himself reported on his arrival "much dacoity and disorder everywhere" beyond the military posts at Mandalay.[6] So the country was allowed to continue under military occupation simultaneously with civil administration.

So far as the normal practice of administration was concerned, this was really a very unusual arrangement likely to confuse anybody who was not directly associated with the on-the-spot situation. Even after five weeks of Bernard's arrival at Mandalay the Secretary of State, Lord RandolphChurchill, was not sure about "the precise relation between the Civil Authorities and the Military Authorities".[7] The whole matter of this relationship appeared to him to be one "of a highly technical and legal nature".[8] The Authorities in Simla and Mandalay, however, had no confusion. To them, the arrangement was a compromise made to meet an extraordinary situation. Thus, according to this arrangement, the Hlutdaw, which had hitherto worked through the British Civil Officers and the local Wuns and Thugyis under the supreme command of General Prendergast, was made responsible to the Chief Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner was answerable to the Viceroy alone. On the other hand, as the country

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[5] Grattan Geary, Burma After the Conquest (London 1886), p.29.

[6] Cmd. 4690, 1886, Telegraphic Correspondence relating to Military Executions and Dacoity in Burmah, p.5, Bernard's Telegram to Foreign Secretary, India, 20 December 1885.

[7] Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, vol. 302, 1886, p. 189. Churchill's speech in the House of Commons, 22 January 1886.

[8] Ibid., p.314. Churchill's speech in the House of Commons, 25 January 1886.

was still under military occupation, the Military Authorities could move troops whenever and wherever they deemed necessary, permission being requested from the District Officer concerned as a matter of form rather than of obligation. For the same reason, the prisoners punished under martial law by the Provost Marshal or any of the military officers did not come under the Civil Officer's cognizance.[9] There were of course matters of common jurisdiction which might cause occasional embarrassment to the authorities concerned. There was, for example, the question of disarmament. The District Officer's recommendation for partial disarmament of a friendly village might not be acceptable to his military counterpart as being inadequate.

However, as events were to show, the arrangement worked quite well. While Bernard set himself the task of organising the machinery of civil administration, Brigadier-General White, who assumed command of the Field Force on 21 December,[10] entered on field operations to break up rebels.[11] Thus civil and military efforts were made side by side until the end of October 1886, when civil administration receded into the background for a time owing to the commencement of the cold season military operations.

In the civil sphere, Bernard's first act was to withdraw Mandalay and four other southern districts, namely, Minhla, Pagan,

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[9] Cmd. 4887, 1886, Further Correspondence, p.12, Viceroy's telegram to Secretary of State, 24 January 1886.

[10] Sir Mortimer Durand, The Life of Field Marshal Sir George White (Edinburgh & London 1915), vol. 1, p.320.

[11] MLEI, vol.957, M 1443/1886, p.4.

Myingyan and Ningyan[12] from the Hlutdaw's jurisdiction and make Civil Officers there directly responsible to the Chief Commissioner until final orders were passed regarding the future British policy.[13] The idea was to make the administration more effective. But the Burmese Ministers, in a series of papers presented to the Chief Commissioner between 23 December 1885 and 1 January 1886 questioned the soundness of this decision. They argued that before notifying a definite policy any modification of this kind was unreasonable,[14] that it would be harmful to the peace of the country if the people came to know that the authority of the Hlutdaw was defective,[15] and that the very existence of the Hlutdaw would be at stake if it were left without any control over the capital.[16] The Ministers were strongly supported by Colonel Sladen. Sladen wrote to the Chief Commissioner that the decision to keep the capital outside the Hlutdaw's jurisdiction would virtually extinguish their power and influence all over the country,[17] and that he was inclined to think it good policy to increase their powers if possible to any extent compatible with good government, rather than limit them at a time of extremely critical importance.[18] But the Chief Commissioner steadily declined to change his decision.[19] The Hlutdaw even demanded

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[12] "Ningyan" was afterwards changed into "Pyinmana" in order to avoid confusion with "Myingyan".

[13] PSCI, vol. 46, p.1128.

[14] Ibid., p.1139.

[15] Ibid., pp. 1141-1142.

[16] Ibid., p.1143.

[17] Ibid., p.1138, Sladen's Letter, 27 December 1885.

[18] Ibid., p.1142, Sladen's Letter, 2 January 1886.

[19] Ibid.,pp.1140, 1145, Bernard's Letters, 28 December 1885 and 8 January 1886.

a constitutional King and threatened resignation if the demand was not met.[20] As a matter of fact, Bernard would not have bothered much if the Ministers had resigned, for he was convinced that things could be better without them. This is clear from his telegram to the secretary to the Government of India dated 10 January, in which he reported that the "Hlutdaw write memoranda and argue but they do nothing".[21]

The bitterness of the Burmese Ministers seems to have been heightened by one simultaneous action of Bernard, namely, the deportation of Taingda Mingyi, the most influential member of the Hlutdaw. Taingda, as we have seen,[22] was widely believed to be very hostile to British interests. King Thibaw said during his interview with The Times correspondent, K.M.Moylan, immediately before his deportation, that Taingda and others forced him to wage war against the English.[23] Apart from this earlier anti-British stand, Taingda had a very bad reputation because of his alleged association with the massacre of 1878.[24] This allegation was never decisively proved. But the rumour was very strong.[25]

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[20] PSCI, vol. 46, p.1148, Minutes of the Hlutdaw's Proceedings, attached to Sladen's Letter to Bernard, 10 January 1886. See also Durand, op.cit., p.330, White's letter to his son, 10 January 1886.

[21] Ibid., p. 1145. On the same date, i.e. 10 January, General White wrote a letter to his son, in which he pointed out exactly the same thing: "They sit in Council, & ape the tricks of other ministers. They pass resolutions, & threaten to resign if not granted 'home rule'." Durand, op.cit., p.331.

[22] See above, p.19.

[23] The Times, 5 December 1885, p.5. See also PSCI, vol. 46, p.361, Bernard's Memorandum on Taingda Mingyi, 25 December 1885.

[24] Cmd. 4614, p. 21.

[25] Geary, op cit., p.39.

All these had perhaps led the Viceroy to send a telegram to Bernard at the time of General Prendergast's advance upon Mandalay suggesting the propriety of deporting Taingda immediately after Mandalay was taken.[26] Thus Taingda's deportation, if judged from the point of view of pragmatic considerations, was quite logical. But it was equally logical for Taingda's colleagues to feel insecure over this action, particularly when their relationship with the Chief Commissioner was extremely bad over the latter's decision to limit their power. This was perhaps the reason why Col. Sladen did not support Taingda's removal.[27]

The study of the pacification raises the question of whether or not Taingda Mingyi's removal was a political blunder on the part of the British. Professor Cady has observed that, by removing Taingda, the British lost the opportunity to utilise effectively the traditional authority of the Hlutdaw.[28] This sounds quite logical, for the Mingyi seems to have commanded a good deal of confidence amongst his colleagues.[29] But the effective use of the Hlutdaw depended not so much on Taingda's personal influence over his colleagues as on the amount of real authority that the Hlutdaw was able to exercise. As a matter of fact, the Hlutdaw was a powerless institution. The British action of forcibly taking

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[26] HC, vol. 81, p.477.

[27] PSCI, vol. 46, p.363, Sladen's Memorandum on Taingda, 26 December 1885.

[28] John F.Cady, A History of Modern Burma (Ithaca, New York 1958), p.127.

[29] PSCI., vol. 46, p.1129.

away the King and breaking up his army of itself completely undermined the traditional authority of the Hlutdaw.[30] Colonel Sladen himself admitted that the Ministers were crippled having no army, police and steamers at their disposal.[31] Brigadier-General White also held an exactly similar opinion.[32] Thus the Hlutdaw was not in a position to enforce prompt obedience, or sustain the Wuns, if their authority was disregarded by the British.[33] The Taingda Mingyi was in office from 1 to 28 December. During these four weeks the Hlutdaw could not make any effective contributions to the actual work of pacification. It failed to restore order,[34] even within the immediate neighbourhood of Mandalay and, in revenue matters, it did little or nothing beyond receiving Mullah Ismail's Bazaar payments on account of the Yegyo Bazaar.[35] So the theory that the authority of the Hlutdaw could have been effectively utilised if Taingda Mingyi was allowed to continue in office is nullified.

The growing unfriendly attitude of the Burmese Ministers was quite apparent at the time of the Viceroy's visit to Mandalay in February 1886. They prevented the city people as far as possible from lining the route along which the viceregal party moved.[36] They

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[30] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India (Simla 1907), vol. V, p.178.

[31] PSCI, vol. 46, pp. 1136, 1138.

[32] Cmd. 4962, 1887, p.81. White's Letter to Adjutant-General in India, 18 Aug. 1886.

[33] Geary, op.cit., pp. 39-40.

[34] Maung Tha Aung and Maung Mya Din, "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, 1941, vol. XXXI, Part II, p.81.

[35] SC, India Office Library, Mss. Eur. E.290, Sladen's Letter to Capt. Adamson, D.C. of Mandalay, 26 January 1886.

[36] The Times, 16 February 1886, p.5.

took no part in the reception of the Viceroy, although they were present in the reception hall.[37] Mortimer Durand, who was with the Viceroy, described the reception hall as "disappointing".[38] They presented no address and extended no welcome to the Viceroy.[39] All that they did was to submit a representation to the Viceroy, in which they expressed their dissatisfaction at the British intention of holding the country for themselves. They said:"We certainly expected that as soon as a treaty had been concluded, our kingdom would have remained to us without loss of prestige to our national honour or our religion."[40] Having said this they demanded "a King who shall be bound down by the British Government to observe law and conform to the rules of constitutional Government".[41] The Viceroy was fully convinced that the Hlutdaw was useless as a pacifying force, and he proposed dissolving it.[42] Thus, in accordance with the orders of the Viceroy, communicated in a confidential memorandum of 25 February 1886, a proclamation was published in order to make known the intention of the Government to administer the country by the direct agency of British officers.[43]

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[37] The Times, 15 February 1886, p.5.

[38] Sir Percy Sykes, Sir Mortimer Durand (London 1926), p.161.

[39] The Times, 15 February 1886, p.5.

[40] SC, Hlutdaw's Representation, p.4.

[41] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[42] HC, vol. 83, p.955, Viceroy's telegram to Secretary of State, 15 February 1886.

[43] Cmd.4887, p.44.

But colonial administration could never be effective without the co-operation of the native element in government. The British were well aware of this. This is why the Secretary of State, in a despatch of 31 December 1885, indicated the need of utilising in the management of local affairs the native element.[44] This was confirmed by the Viceroy in his famous Minute of 17 February 1886.[45] So, although the Hlutdaw was abolished from March, an advisory body consisting of five Burmese Ministers, namely, the Kinwun Mingyi, the Taungwin Mingyi, the Pin Atwinwun, the Shwedaik Atwinwun, and the Tabayin Wundauk, was retained "to advise and report on matters referred to them by the Chief Commissioner".[46] The rest of the Members of the Hlutdaw were pensioned off. Colonel Sladen did not, however, support this action. He proposed that appointments should be provided for all the ministerial officers as Myooks, or as Wuns, after the abolition of the Hlutdaw. His object was to ensure the goodwill and loyal services of theseofficials, instead of allowing them to leave their old appointments as malcontents.[47]

Lord Dufferin's visit to Upper Burma was followed by another major change. The country, which had already been annexed to Her Majesty's Dominions by the Viceroy's proclamation of 1 January 1886,[48] became a province of British

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[44] Cmd. 4614, p.265.

[45] Cmd. 4887, p.27.

[46] Ibid., p.44.

[47] SC, Sladen's letter to Chief Commissioner, 12 March 1886, Mss. Eur. E. 290, India Office Library. As we have seen, Bernard and Sladen did not agree on many important issues. This might have been the reason for Sladen's retirement from Burma in May 1886.

[48] See below, pp.115-116.

India from 26 February 1886. Lord Dufferin considered several alternatives before he recommended annexation. One of these alternatives was to transform Upper Burma into a buffer State with a member of the 'Alompra' dynasty on the throne. But this scheme was considered unacceptable on the ground that Upper Burma was too weak and lacked the elasticity necessary in a buffer state.[49]

A second alternative was to maintain Upper Burma as a fully protected State with a Burmese dynasty and Burmese officials but with a British Resident to exercise some control over internal affairs as well as foreign relations. But the idea was not found suitable because the Burmese rulers' conception of their own superiority to all created beings might render diplomatic intercourse between themselves and other nations impossible.[50] Besides, there was no Prince of the Royal House to whom the trust could be safely confided. There was the Myingun Prince, then resident at Pondicherry. But his feelings towards the British were unfriendly.[51] There was the Nyaung Oke Prince, Thibaw's half brother, then in Bengal. But he was unpopular in Burma, and of unsatisfactory character. A related alternative was to place the young son of the late Nyaung Yan Prince on the throne with British officers to administer the State in his name until he came of age. But this course, it was thought, would impose all the problems and expense of a British occupation with no corresponding advantages and would involve a long range commitment

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[49] Cmd. 4887, p.22, Viceroy's Minute, 17 February 1886.

[50] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[51] Colonel Sladen, who had a very good opinion of the Myingun Prince, thought that the Prince was "thoroughly in with the French". See SC, Bernard's Letter, 17 October 1885; PSCI, vol. 45, pp. 209-210.

to a prince who might prove totally unfitted to play the part designed for him.[52]

A third alternative was to place an ecclesiastical dignitary at the head of the State with British officers actually administering the country. But such an arrangement was seen as a possible source of future embarrassment.[53]

After considering several possible courses Lord Dufferin recommended annexation pure and simple. He wrote that it was only by annexation and the establishment of a British administration that Upper Burma could be rescued from the state of lawlessness and anarchy in which many parts of it were plunged.[54]

So Upper Burma, which became a province of India from 26 February, on Lord Dufferin's recommendation, was constituted a scheduled district from 1 March,[55] and from 19 March the Civil Officers serving throughout the province were provided with a rough code of instructions for guidance.[56] According to these instructions, each district was placed in charge of a Civil Officer, who was invested with the full powers of a Deputy Commissioner and, in criminal matters, with powers to try as a Magistrate any case and to pass any sentence. In criminal matters, the Courts were to be guided as far

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[52] Cmd. 4887, p.23.

[53] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[54] Ibid., p.24.

[55] HC, vol. 84, p.1145. Upper Burma being constituted a scheduled district was removed from the operation of the statute law applying to the rest of the Indian Empire. This enabled the local administration to frame simple Regulations with the approval of the Government of India, suitable to cope with the actual state of affairs.

[56] Upper Burma was administered in accordance with these instructions until 29 November 1886 when Regulations, the draft of which was submitted to the Government of India in March and approved by the Governor-General in Council in October, came into force following the Chief Commissioner's Notifications on 22 November. See IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Judicial), pp. 8 -112, and vol. 2720, December 1886 (Judicial), p.97.

as possible by the provisions of the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure, the Penal Code, and the Evidence Act.[57] But no appeals were allowed from any decision.[58] True, this denial of the right of appeal was necessitated by a pragmatic consideration, namely, that of the speedy administration of justice in an extremely unsettled country.[59] But this together with the extensive powers conferred upon the Civil Officers, which were indeed most freely used,[60] tended to make the administrators, particularly those who were over-zealous, sometimes high-handed. Thus Haji Mirza Muhammad Ali was forced by the Deputy Commissioner of Mandalay to surrender in a most arbitrary manner a portion of the land which he had been holding for the last ten years by a Royal grant.[61]

The Code of Instructions laid special emphasis on the utilisation of indigenous officials, such as the Myothugyis and Thugyis, in maintaining order, pacifying the country, and collecting the revenue. In the matter of collecting revenue particularly the old Burmese custom was observed. The Thugyis were to receive 10% on the revenue collections as under the Burmese Government.[62] The Myothugyis and Thugyis were given police powers in their respective jurisdictions.[63]

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[57] Cmd. 4962, p.118, Provisional Instructions vide Govt. of India letter No. 52, 19 October 1886.

[58] Ibid., pp. 118-119.

[59] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Judicial), p.6; JLEI, vol. 326, pp. 82, 85.

[60] IUBP, vol. 2720, August 1886 (Judicial), p.4.

[61] Ibid., pp. 17-19.

[62] Cmd. 4962, p.116.

[63] Ibid., pp. 116-117.

The British Civil Officers were instructed to treat with leniency and consideration local officials, since they did not as yet know the British system.[64]

Sir Charles Bernard[65] was from the beginning handicapped by a shortage of officers. By June the number of European officers in Upper Burma was only twenty-four,[66] the ratio being over 3,000 square miles for one officer. The reasons were, first, the want of suitable candidates with a knowledge of Burmese; secondly, the fear that any large drafts from the provincial staffs in India would seriously cripple the administration there and, thirdly, the greediness of the young officers who applied for service in Burma having made the grant of excessive promotion a condition of their accepting it.[67] In June the Chief Commissioner, after travelling over much of the country and consulting the officers concerned, asked for six additional officers.[68] The Viceroy, who felt strongly the need for strengthening the administrative staff,[69] sanctioned the proposal and, at the same time, asked the Chief Commissioner about the feasibility of appointing divisional commissioners:

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[64] Cmd. 4962, p.116.

[65] Bernard became Sir Charles Bernard in March 1886.

[66] See IUBP, vol. 2720, December 1886 (Establishment), p.33; PGLIB, vol. 84, p.295, Govt. of India Letter No. 23, 5 June 1886.

[67] PGLIB. vol .84, pp. 295-296.

[68] IUBP, vol. 2720, December 1886 (Establishment), p.33.

[69] HC, vol. 88, p.339, Viceroy's Tel. 14 July 1886.

> "There are inconveniences in your being long absent from headquarters, and out of reach of the telegraph. Would not the establishment of three or four Commissionerships take off pressure from you, and give you more time to direct administration?"[70]

The Chief Commissioner welcomed the idea and, so, between June and September 1886 the districts, which were to number seventeen by December,[71] were grouped into four divisions, namely, Northern, Central, Southern and Eastern.[72]

Meanwhile, in August, the Government of India, for administrative convenience, decided to appoint a Judicial Commissioner. The Chief Commissioner vehemently opposed the move. In a telegram to the Home Secretary, dated 8 August, he stated that he thought it much better not to have a Judicial Commissioner or anything corresponding to a High Court in Upper Burma for a year or so.[73] In another telegram, dated 1 September, he argued:

> "I have seen much of many Judicial Commissioners, and have been one myself, so I can foresee the effect of such an appointment. Here we have next to no civil litigation, and there may be petty war going on in many districts. The Judicial Commissioner will give his exclusive attention to criminal work; he will probably organise phalanxis of pleaders, he will insist more and more on precision of procedure, and he will from time to time let off rank dacoit leaders who ought not to have benefit of technical doubts in the present state of the country."[74]

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[70] IUBP, vol. 2720, December 1886 (Est.), p.34. It may however be noted that the system of divisional commissionership was not at first encouraged because the idea was to adopt "the simplest and cheapest system of administration". See Viceroy's Minute, Cmd.4887, p.27.

[71] IUBP, vol. 2720, December 1886 (Public), pp. 67, 71.

[72] The Commissioners were G.D.Burgess (Northern), F.W.R.Fryer (Central), H. St. George Tucker (Eastern) and J.J.De La Touche (Southern).

[73] IUBP, vol. 2720, December 1886 (Judicial), p.87.

[74] Ibid., p.88.

The Chief Commissioner also backed his argument by the opinions of the Divisional Commissioners who did not favour the appointment.[75] But in spite of this, the Government of India took the decision to appoint a Judicial Commissioner in the next spring.[76]

But the appointment of Divisional Commissioners and a Judicial Commissioner did not solve Sir Charles Bernard's problem; he wanted young officers, as many as possible, to cover the whole country. The problem could have been partially solved if suitable Burmese officials of the ex-government were available. There were of course a few high Burmese officials who could be utilised, but they refused to go out into the districts,[77] presumably for fear of retribution from the rebels. Thus Minletwa and U Tha Ta refused to accept the offices for the Yaw country and Zibingyi respectively.[78] Even the number of Myooks which the Deputy Commissioners of various districts were able to procure was far too small to meet the actual requirement. From the Chief Commissioner's Notes on various districts between April and August 1886 it appears that the number of Myooks in a district did not even average two.[79] This was less than one-third of the actual number recommended by the Chief Commissioner in his Code of Instructions.[80] Thus, between December 1885 and October 1886 Sir Charles Bernard had to build up the structure of civil administration with very limited man-power which he had at his disposal.

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[75] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Judicial), pp. 63, 66, 92.

[76] Ibid., vol. 2720, December 1886 (Judicial), p.88. Home Secretary's Tel. to Chief Commissioner, No. 11, 18 September 1886.

[77] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, March 1887 (Est.), p.43.

[78] Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[79] Ibid., January 1887 (Public), pp. 10, 12, 16, 19, 25-26, 30, 38, 40, 43, 45-46.

[80] The Code of Instructions recommended that there should be Myooks for each district and that some of the largest districts might require more Myooks. See Cmd. 4962, p.116.

Simultaneously, measures were also taken to strengthen the basis of that structure. First, a strong force of military police was organised to back up the civil administration. In February 1886 proposals were submitted to the Government of India, which included among other things the enlistment of two military police levies each to consist of 561 officers and men, 2,000 military police to be recruited in Northern India, and a small force of Burmese police for detection and purely police work.[81] The proposals were supported by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Roberts. They were accepted by the Government of India in full.[82] Two levies were speedily raised, and were in the province by the beginning of July. One was placed in the Mandalay district, the other was sent for service in the Chindwin Valley. By July it became clear that the pacification of Upper Burma, and the reduction of rebels, was "a heavier business than had at first been supposed".[83] So two additional levies of the same strength were proposed.[84] These were sanctioned by August 1886,[85] so that by November 1886 the sanctioned strength rose to 6,728 of which 4,423 actually arrived[86] to hold forty six posts throughout the country.[87]

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[81] BFMP, vol. 2662, 1886, Index 8, C.Bernard's Memorandum on levies and military police for Burma, 20 February 1886.

[82] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Police), p.7.

[83] Ibid., vol. 2720, November 1886 (Police), p.24.

[84] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[85] Ibid., p.34.

[86] Ibid., vol. Z/P/2035, February 1887 (Police), p. 155.

[87] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.20.

The second measure, namely, the disarmament of villages, was equally essential for strengthening the position of the district administrators. Between 1 December 1885, when a disarmament proclamation was issued for the first time, and June 1886 efforts were made by the Districts Officers, particularly by those in Taungdwingyi, Shwebo and Sagaing,[88] to call in guns. But this was very limited in nature. So in June the Civil Officers throughout Upper Burma were instructed that licences of guns should be issued to respectable people in villages which were kept in a state of defence, the minimum number being ten guns for the larger villages of the plains and five guns for smaller villages in the hilly or broken country,[89] that licences should authorise only the possession of firearms, they should not authorise the holders to go armed,[90] and that they should be signed by the Deputy Commissioner himself and by no one else.[91]

There were three other measures, which were conciliatory in nature. One of these was the building of roads and railway. Sir Charles Bernard was convinced that this would "contribute directly and most materially to the pacification and good administration of the country".[92] Road-making was begun by the middle of 1886.[93] In Mandalay, fifteen miles of roads were repaired, re-bridged, and metalled; various district roads were also taken in hand.[94] The

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[88] IUBP, vol. 2720, September 1886 (Public), p.24.

[89] Ibid., p.24.

[90] Ibid., p.25.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Ibid., vol. Z/P/2035, July 1887 (Public), p.192.

[93] Ibid.

[94] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.21.

proposal for constructing a railway from Toungoo to Mandalay was made in June. It was hoped that the railway would bring the land-locked Eastern districts, lying between the Shan hills and the Pegu Yoma, in close touch with the Irrawaddy and thus provide an outlet for their produce; that it would provide ample employment for the labouring classes, and that it would facilitate quick movement of troops.[95]

Secondly, attempts were made to win the support of the Thathanabaing and the pongyis. In February 1886, a plan was made to allow the Thathanabaing to extend his jurisdiction over Lower Burma.[96] The objects were two-fold: first, to bring the moral influence of the Thathanabaing to bear upon the recalcitrant pongyis in Lower Burma and, secondly, to make the people of both the provinces feel that the British were really anxious to uphold their religion by bringing the pongyis of both the provinces under the common leadership of the Thathanabaing. The plan was, however, postponed until the beginning of 1887 as the country was still very unsettled.[97] But the issue as a whole was not ignored. The Viceroy himself during his visit to Mandalay assured the people that their religion would be respected, and the property of their ecclesiastical establishments placed under the protection of the laws.[98]

Thirdly, on 3 March, a proclamation was issued which said that the British would respect the customs, rights, privileges and religious

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[95] Cmd. 4962, pp. 37-42, Bernard's Memorandum, 10 June 1886. See also RTLI, vol. 152, p.314. The Railway from Rangoon to Prome was completed in 1877, and in 1885, a line to Toungoo frontier was made.

[96] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2036, March 1887 (Judicial), p.154.

[97] Ibid., p.155.

[98] SC, Dufferin's Address, February 1886, p.3.

institutions of all classes, protect life and property, and pardon the rebels if they surrendered to the British by 30 June 1886.[99] One thousand copies of the proclamation in Burmese were sent to all civil officers, each with the instruction that they be distributed as widely as possible throughout the districts.[100]

While Sir Charles Bernard was desperately trying to build up the administrative structure and to place it on a firm footing, Brigadier-General White was engaged in ceaseless operations against the rebels. Early in January 1886 several converging movements of the flying columns were carried out in the neighbourhood of Mandalay.[101] But the result was not satisfactory; every time the position was found deserted by the insurgents.[102] This meant that the system of flying columns was not working. In fact, the columns could hardly leave any impression on either the people or the insurgents.[103] The insurgents were scattered over a vast country - they vanished at the first appearance of any large body of troops, only to re-appear immediately the coast was clear. They had adherents amongst those upon whom the British were dependent for information, and the

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[99] BMFP, vol. 2662, Index No. 5, Proclamation by Bernard, 3 March 1886.

[100] Ibid., Circular to all Civil Officers, 6 March 1886.

[101] IMP, vol. 2768, pp. 107-108.

[102] Ibid., p.109.

[103] Sir Charles Crosthwaite, The Pacification of Burma (London 1912), p.12.

march of the columns was known often before they started moving.[104] Even if the troops accidently succeeded in getting near them, being thoroughly acquainted with the country which in most places afforded good cover for fugitives, they had little difficulty in getting away on fast ponies.[105] So, to the people, the presence of the insurgents was a reality; they never dared to oppose them, or to give information to the British for fear of retribution.[106]

The situation deteriorated so fast that during the first half of January some ten thousand armed rebels were reported to be within a radius of twenty miles from Mandalay, and a general attack upon the city was threatened.[107]

The system of flying columns was discouraged by the Commander-in-Chief, who observed in February: "Excepting where the headquarters of a district are upon the river bank, and military connection can be maintained by posts, the advantage of small detachments in the work of pacification is not apparent."[108] Between January and March nine major posts, in addition to a chain of road-posts in the Yamethin-Pyinmana region, were established.[109] The idea was to make the system of flying columns effective.

The exigencies of the military situation necessitated re-organising the army from 1 April 1886.[110] Hitherto Upper Burma command was under the Government of India, while that in Lower Burma

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[104] Durand, op.cit., p.327, General White's letter to his son, 10 January 1886.

[105] Cmd. 4962, p.199.

[106] MLEI, vol. 959, M 5837/1886, p.16; Cmd. 4887, p.57.

[107] The Times, 7 January 1886, p.5.

[108] BFMP, vol. 2662, Index 7, Memorandum by Quartermaster-General, No. 47 FC, 12 February 1886.

[109] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, p.191.

[110] MDI, vol. 2288, M 3315/1886; MMLD, vol. 135, M 3315, No. 42, 16 March 1886.

was under Madras Government. This was an anomalous position. It was impossible to separate completely the two commands, or to prevent any intermingling of the troops. When this was the case, the local civil government was likely to be embarrassed when it found that the troops at its disposal were subject to the control of some other governments, while the Madras Government which had no control over the civil administration in Burma was naturally at a loss in dealing with questions involving a close union of civil and military interests. Furthermore, from a purely military point of view, the arrangement was extremely inconvenient and productive of much delay and circumlocution, as references made by the GOC would have to pass through the Commander-in-Chief to the Government of Madras, and then through the Government of India to the Commander-in-Chief in India for opinion, before they could be finally disposed of by the Government of India. To avoid these anomalies, the whole of the troops in Burma were formed into one divisional command. In addition to the divisional general, two brigadiers-general were appointed, one to command at Rangoon and the other at Mandalay, also a seniorselected officer to command at Bhamo. General Prendergast vacated the command, and Brigadier-General White took over with the local rank of Major-General.[111]

The situation, however, continued to deteriorate. Throughout the month of April the country was unusually disturbed. On 15 April the adherents of the Myingun Prince, who were always active in the north-eastern region of Mandalay, made a determined attack upon the

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[111] Cmd. 4887, p.66.

city of Mandalay. The attack was in pursuance of a plan made on the occasion of the Burmese new year which began on 14 April.[112] The insurgents rushed a police station and cut down two or three of the policemen, killed an unarmed European, and set fire to houses.[113] The incendiaries were mostly on ponies; they galloped from place to place, firing the houses.[114] It was, indeed, a horrible time. The citizens were panicked, the shops and bazaars were closed, and business generally was at a standstill.[115] H.Thirkell White, who was at that time Secretary to the Chief Commissioner for (Upper) Burma, recorded his experience in the following words: "The fortnight which followed was the longest fortnight of my life. It was crowded with incident, attacks and risings, above all, incendiary fires."[116] About 800 houses within the city, and between 2,000 and 2,500 in the suburbs, were destroyed.[117]

In the same month, the followers of the Myinzaing Prince, who had moved his headquarters to the Natteik Pass into the Shan hills, came down to the plains lying to the south-east of Mandalay more frequently than ever and burnt villages, attacked police posts and convoys, sabotaged telegraph lines, and carried off the village headmen.[118] Equally active were the Choungwa Princes around Minthe and Myotha;[119] the Kyimyindaing Prince in the neighbourhood of

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[112] Thirkell White, op.cit., p.164, and The Times, 21 April 1886, p.5.

[113] ARB, 1885-86, Part IV, p.7; Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, pp. 121-122, and John Nisbet, Burma under British Rule-and Before (Westminster 1901), vol. 1, p.111.

[114] The Times, 21 April 1886, p.5.

[115] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions, p.193.

[116] Thirkell White, op.cit., pp. 164-165.

[117] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions, p.193.

[118] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, p 93.

[119] Ibid., pp. 37,81. The Choungwa Princes and their followers seem to have taken special interest in sabotaging the telegraph lines; they destroyed the poles and, where possible, chopped the wire up into small lengths which made repairs difficult.

Hlaingdet and Meiktila,[120] and Prince Maung Hmat Kyi around Shwebo.[121] Maung Hmat appears to have been a real threat to the British. He had already proclaimed himself King in the Tabayin district.[122] On 19 April his men, some 150 strong, entered Shwebo, released fifteen prisoners from the lock-up, and burnt thirty-five houses.[123]

The seriousness of the situation can be seen from General White's letter to his son dated 15 May 1886. The General wrote:

> "The resistance to our authority is much more persistent than I had anticipated ... The men are breaking down very fast..."[124]

The resistance grew more and more persistent throughout the rainy season which began in June. The British, however, expected that with the commencement of the rainy season the intensity of rebel and dacoit activity would be considerably reduced.[125] But the rains appear only to have instilled in the rebels greater energy, and they sprang up"from all quarters like snails after a summer shower".[126] Extensive military operations during the rainy season were virtually impossible. The jungles grew so thick and paths so impassable that the troops could hardly pursue the rebels or dacoits.[127] The role of the army was, therefore, essentially

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[120] MLEI, vol.961, M 7753, pp. 95, 99, 122.

[121] Ibid., pp. 82, 97-98.

[122] Ibid., p.110.

[123] Ibid., p.97, and Cmd. 4887, p.66.

[124] Durand, op.cit., p.343.

[125] History of the Third Burmese War, Period II, p.3.

[126] The Pioneer Mail, 15 August 1886, p.201. See also E.C.Browne, The Coming of the Great Queen (London 1888), p.235, and J.Chailley-Bert, The Colonization of Indo-China (London 1894), p.161.

[127] Browne, op.cit., p.235.

defensive in character; the troops engaged the enemy, as far as possible, within the periphery of their posts.[128] The increased rebel activity sometimes forced them to undertake operations far beyond their posts, but the result was generally disappointing.

Numerous engagements took place during the rainy season.[129] A few instances will show how persistent the resistance to British authority was. In June, the Myinzaing Prince, who had already come down from the Natteik Pass and engaged the British several times around Hlaingdet,[130] was reported to be passing northward with a large following. His plan was to make a false attack to the west so as to divert the British attention there, while he with his main body of fighters would escape along the border of the Shan hills.[131] The plan was a success, for the converging movements of columns under Capt. Grant, Capt. Wilbraham and Major Price could not trace the Prince. Capt. Grant and Capt. Wilbraham, who were sent to the west, met the body of rebels who were covering the Prince's escape and were severely wounded, while Major Price, who was sent to the east, did not meet the enemy.[132]

While the Myinzaing Prince was attempting an escape northward, his supporters, Buddha Yaza, Bo Shwe and U Ôktama[133] were actively

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[128] History of the Third Burmese War, Period II, p.4.

[129] Between June and October 1886, 130 engagements took place. These, however, do not include numerous minor affairs such as men shot on sentry, while on escort duty, murdered, and so forth. See MLEI, vol. 969, No. 75 of 1887, pp. 1-19.

[130] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, pp. 85, 98, 102.

[131] Ibid., M 8548/1886, p.5.

[132] Ibid., M 7957/1886, p.6.

[133] See below, pp. 153-157 for details.

resisting the British in the south-eastern and south-western regions of the country. By June Buddha Yaza obtained absolute control over the north-western portion of Pyinmana district[134] and fortified a position on the Sinthe Creek.[135] He was also planning to combine with the Shans on the east bank of the Sittang for an attack on Pyinmana itself.[136] In the beginning of July, Major Sorell with two guns, 109 rifles and nine mounted infantry left Yamethin and, after a forced march of twelve hours, met Buddha Yaza with 700 men. The fight continued for five hours; the rebel stronghold was captured, but Buddha Yaza escaped.[137]

The most stubborn resistance was, however, encountered in the south-western region where Bo Shwe and U Ôktama had been consolidating their position for some time past. Bo Shwe was master over much of the country to the west of Minbu and Minhla.[138] Early in June Robert Phayre, the Deputy Commissioner of Minbu, was killed in an engagement with Bo Shwe at Padein, a few miles south-west of Minbu.[139] His men fell back leaving his body, which was carried off by the Burmans.[140]

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[134] H. St. Tucker's Diary, 1886-1889, p.45, Mss. Eur. E 200, India Office Library.

[135] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7957/1886, p.7.

[136] H. St. Tucker's Diary, p.46.

[137] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7957/1886, p.8.

[138] ARB, 1885-86, Part IV, p.15.

[139] Cmd. 4887, pp. 72-73.

[140] Ibid., p.73.

Bo Shwe emerged more powerful than ever. "The story went forth", wrote Major Browne, "that the great kala governor had fallen a victim to Bo Sheway's skill, and as a matter of course many now flocked to serve him."[141] However, a few days after Phayre's death, Major Gordon with 145 rifles and two guns attacked Bo Shwe's position near Ngape in the Arakan Yoma, and defeated him after a severe engagement in which eight British soldiers were killed and twenty-six including an officer wounded.[142] But the success was short-lived. Ngape was reoccupied by Bo Shwe as the British garrison was withdrawn in July for health reasons.[143] Bo Shwe now proclaimed himself 'King of Minbu'[144] and appointed a Governor of the river.

Pongyi U Ôktama, whose field of operations was immediately to the north of Minhla, was no less formidable. In June Ôktama threatened the post at Salin, some seventy-five miles north of Minhla. Capt. Dunsford, commanding the post, moved out with forty rifles against the rebels, and was killed in a fierce battle some two and a half miles south-west of Salin.[145] By the end of July the position of the post became very critical, being surrounded and attacked day and night by rebels, and ammunition running short.[146] Capt. Atkinson was promptly sent off with 150 rifles to reinforce

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[141] Browne, op.cit., p.280. The story is supported by the fact that Phayre's body was carried off by the Burmans, which was subsequently recovered. See Cmd. 4887, p.73.

[142] Cmd. 4887, p.75.

[143] ARB, 1885-86, Part IV, p.16.

[144] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7957/1886, p.9. Bo Shwe, being a follower of the Myinzaing Prince, was not a rival candidate for the throne. So the words 'King of Minbu' may perhaps be interpreted to mean 'Ruler of Minbu'.

[145] Ibid, vol. 961, M 8548/1886, p.4.

[146] Ibid., M 8845/1886, p.3.

the position. The rebels were driven off, but Capt. Atkinson was killed. Thereupon Salin was reinforced by General Low, who now directed the operations there.

Simultaneously, operations were also undertaken against Prince Maung Hmat, Nga Mya, Hla-U, Nga Yaing, Tha Pwe and other leaders of resistance. Of these, Hla-U appears to have given by far the greatest trouble to the British.[147] Between 14 and 20 June Capt. Sage pursued Hla-U from one village to another until he reached Magyioke, Hla-U's own village, some twenty miles south of Ye-U. The village was taken after a brief engagement, but Hla-U managed to escape wounded.[148] By the end of July Magyioke was again attacked, but Hla-U, who was in the village, slipped off as before.[149]

In July the military authorities in India admitted that the number of troops hitherto employed in Upper Burma was inadequate to cope with the situation.[150] According to the return of 1 July 1886, there were 14,327 men, exclusive of British officers, of whom about 1,500 were sick and 700 absent.[151] They were distributed under three Brigades. The First Brigade under Brigadier-General Low was operating in the Lower Irrawaddy Valley, from the old frontier to Mandalay, including Kyauksé district, as well as in the Chindwin

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[147] See below, pp. 157-160.

[148] MLEI, vol. 961, M 8548/1886, p.3, White's Journal, 9 July 1886.

[149] Ibid., M 8845/1886, p.2.

[150] Ibid., M 7957/1886, p.1, Narrative of events by A.C.Yate, Quartermaster-General's Dept., 20 July 1886.

[151] Ibid., p.3, White's Tel. to Quartermaster-General, No. 1735, 17 July 1886.

Valley; the Second Brigade, under Brigadier-General Griffith, in the Upper Irrawaddy Valley as far as Bhamo, and the Third Brigade, under Brigadier-General Anderson, in the Pyinmana Yamethin region.[152] The country was so vast that the overall military control exerted by these brigades was never more than nominal. General White experienced how rapidly and secretly strong bodies of insurgents - numbering sometimes from 2,000 to 4,000 men - could be assembled in the neighbourhoods not protected by military posts.[153] He was convinced that without a close occupation of the disturbed districts by military posts pacification was virtually impossible.[154] So in July and August 1886 he asked for reinforcements.[155] The Government of India agreed to send by 10 October a huge force to relieve those already in Burma.[156] The troops to be relieved would be kept in Burma for four or five months longer, so that, including those sent in relief, the force at the disposal of the General commanding would be very considerable, and should suffice to complete rapidly the pacification of the country.[157] In view of this very large augmentation of the force in Burma, and of the extended operations to be undertaken next cold season, Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Macpherson, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, was

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[152] MLEI, vol. 961, Gen. White's letter to Quartermaster-General, No. L/262, 17 July 1886, pp. 1-4 (No. 117 of 1886)

[153] Ibid., p.4.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid., vol. 962, M 9126/1886, p.2.

[156] Ibid., pp. 1, 4.

[157] MMLD, vol. 136, M 8853, p.1, Govt. of India Letter No. 117, 13 August 1886.

ordered to transfer his headquarters temporarily to Burma, and remain there till the conclusion of the operations.[158]

The extension of military operations subjected Lord Dufferin to disparaging criticism in England. The attitude of Parliament was becoming increasingly tough on the Burmese Question. Thus Samuel Smith, an opposition member , said before the House of Commons on 30 August 1886:

> "The war in Upper Burmah, instead of being a military promenade, costing £300,000, has developed into a national uprising, involving much bloodshed and expenditure. Our forces are to be raised to nearly 30,000 men this coming winter, and no one can tell how long it will take to trample out the resistance of an entire nation. It seems certain that, instead of costing £300,000, it is likely to cost several millions; and I wish this House to consider afresh whether it is fair to throw upon the over-burdened Exchequer of India so heavy an additional burden."[159]

Smith tried to substantiate his view with reference to several factors, namely, the average meagre income per head of population in India,[160] the increased embarrassment of the finances of India,[161] the unfavourable public opinion in India,[162] and the growing hatred of the Burmese people created out of their feeling that the British had violated their national convictions and caused unspeakable sufferings to them.[163] Cremer, another opposition member, went so

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[158] MMLD, vol. 136, M 8853, p.2, Govt. of India Letter, No. 117, 13 August 1886.

[159] Hansard, vol. 308, p.798.

[160] Ibid., p.800.

[161] Ibid., p.798.

[162] Ibid., p.799.

[163] Ibid., pp. 798-799.

far as to say that the Government, Parliament and the nation had been deceived by the Indian officials with reference to the real condition of affairs in Upper Burma.[164] Consequently, an Amendment was proposed disapproving the extension of military operations and representing that the expenses of the operations should not be borne exclusively by India. The Amendment was, however, defeated by a majority of seventy-four.[165] But it clearly showed the changing mood of the House, because in the previous February a similar motion had been defeated by an overwhelming majority of 215.[166]

Lord Dufferin, however, viewed the Burmese Question from an entirely different angle. He believed that the British people were getting impatient because they failed to appreciate the exact nature of the job.[167] He wrote to Lord Goschen[168] about this time that, in spite of a big army, an efficient constabulary and the advantage of modern means of communication, it had been found impossible to suppress the Irish rebellion. Burma, he pointed out, presented a much tougher job; it was a country with a population of inveterate gang-robbers reinforced by a disbanded army and adherents of numerous pretenders, and with a terrain covered with jungles and swamps.[169]

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[164] Hansard, vol. 308, p.808.

[165] Ibid., p.858.

[166] Ibid., vol. 302, p.986.

[167] Sir Alfred Lyall, The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava (London 1905), vol. II, pp. 128-129.

[168] Lord Goschen (1831-1907) was one of the most influential men of his time. He served in the governments of Lord Palmerston, Lord Russell, Gladstone and Lord Salisbury in various capacities.

[169] Lyall, op.cit., p.129.

In an elaborate Memorandum prepared in October, Dufferin defended his Burma policy still more emphatically. With reference to the irritated public opinion in England he pointed out that the Government of India had done all that was possible for them to assist the authorities in Burma to bring about a speedy pacification of the country. They had met every demand of the civil and military authorities in Burma in respect of troops, money, supplies, horses, guns and civil officers. But, the Viceroy argued, the problem was of such a difficult nature that it could not have been solved in a few months.

> "Suddenly descending as we did", he continued, "into an arena which for years, nay for centuries, had been the theatre of domestic anarchy and the play-ground of hereditary bandits, rebels, pretenders, and gang robbers, can we expect its inhabitants in a few months, under the auspices of a strange and alien Government, to subside into a condition of Arcadian tranquility?"

The Viceroy then pointed out how an energetic and vigorous ruler like Dalhousie took three years to pacify Pegu and how the English Government with a large army and an effective police and other invaluable advantages failed to cope with the Irish situation effectively. The Viceroy also spoke of the natural difficulties under which the work of pacification was carried out - the rains and their paralysing effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of military operations, as well as the climatic dangers they superinduced.[170]

Of the difficulties pointed out by Lord Dufferin, the difficult nature of the terrain seems to have constituted a real problem so

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[170] DP, Reel 517, Memorandum attached to the letter No. 48 of 18 October 1886.

far as the military operations were concerned. The whole country was, to use General White's phraseology, "one vast military obstacle".[171] There were dense jungles where paths had constantly to be cut; there were malarial swamps through which man and beast could scarcely fight their way; there were hills which were a tangle of trees and creepers and, above all, there were numerous streams and rivers most of which were unbridged.[172] All these defied every calculation as to effective military operations. General White admitted in a letter to his wife that the country was the most difficult he had ever seen or thought of to plan operations in.[173] The terrain became especially difficult during the rainy season when the low lying alluvial tracts[174] were covered with water. Even at Mandalay, 500 miles from the sea, the river covered a breadth of five miles, and many hundreds of square miles were flooded to a depth of four to ten feet.[175] The results were disastrous. The legs of the pack-animals or the wheels of the country carts, which the authorities might occasionally hire for transport purposes, sank deep into the mud and water so

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[171] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7957/1886, p.3.

[172] Joseph Dautremer, Burma Under British Rule (London 1913), pp. 74-75, and Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.12.

[173] Durand, op.cit., p.326. White's Letter to his wife, 3 January 1886.

[174] The low lying alluvial tracts include the country near the mouths of the Toeping and Shweli, the country round Mandalay and Kyaukse on the lower waters of the Myitnge and its tributary the Panlaung, the country on the banks of the Chindwin, the country round Taungdwingyi in the basin of the Yin, the country round Salin Myo and Sinbyugyun north of Minbu, and the Valley of the Sittang. These tracts being fertile were thickly populated and, therefore, the scenes of military operations.

[175] Sir Charles Bernard, "Burma: The New Province", The Scottish Geographical Magazine, 1888, vol. IV, Edinburgh, p.67.

that a column on the march lost its mobility which was the most vital thing in a country where an ambush was expected at every step. Great difficulty was also experienced in keeping the troops supplied with boots which rotted in the mud and water, and fell to pieces after a few weeks' wear.[176] The rain was accompanied by very high temperatures, the maximum being 106°F.[177] The troops quickly fell victim to cholera and heat apoplexy. By October 1886 930 had died from disease alone and 2,032 had been invalided.[178]

The difficulties mentioned above certainly did much to retard the work of pacification. But there were certain other things which must also be taken into consideration. One was the uncertainty of British policy. For three months, from December 1885 to February 1886, the British had kept the people of Upper Burma in a state of uncertainty as to their future. By their very first proclamation, issued on 1 December 1885, they had retained almost all the officials of the old Government and allowed the Hlutdaw to continue to function as before with Colonel Sladen, the Chief Political Officer, as its president. This was undoubtedly a sound measure, for this made people believe that the British intended, at least for the time being, to rule the country with them. But,in spite of this, they hesitated to co-operate with the British,[179] because they were not sure whether the British really meant to stay in Upper Burma

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[176] History of the Third Burmese War, Period 1, p.70.

[177] Ibid., p.69.

[178] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.19.

[179] It seems most likely that many Upper Burmans, who had had the opportunity to compare their lot with that of their brethren in Lower Burma, would have accepted British rule.

permanently. The Proclamation did not say anything about this. So the memory of the First Burmese War prevented them from co-operating with the British. During the First Burmese War, many men who had held high rank in the Burmese Government joined the British, on the supposition that the latter would never return to the Burmese Government the territory they had occupied. But when Pegu was ultimately evacuated under the Treaty of Yandabo, the lot of such of these men as could not get away to the British Provinces of Tenasserim or Arakan was a cruel one. Both they themselves, and their families, were generally put to death by the Burmese Government. Dreading a repetition of such conduct on the part of the British during the Second Burmese War, all Burmans of high rank steadfastly maintained their allegiance to the national cause, and retired as the British troops advanced, dragging with them wherever it was possible, as in some frontier districts, the whole of the population.[180]

A similar fear was noticeable among the people of Upper Burma after the occupation of Mandalay. The Russian traveller Minayeff, who was in Mandalay in February 1886, wrote:

> "The Burmese in their perplexity do not know whether their country has been annexed to the British Empire for good or it is going back to the hands of their Kings, and remembering the year '23, they are afraid of openly siding with the British."[181]

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[180] Lieut.-Colonel Horace Albert Browne, Statistical and Historical Account of the District of Thayetmyo (Rangoon 1873), pp. 62-63.

[181] I.P.Minayeff, Travels in and Diaries of India & Burma, p.127.

This uncertainty of British policy seems to have been quite inconsistent with the idea of decisive political action hand in hand with vigorous military action, which had been in the mind of the authorities for sometime past. Thus, in a pamphlet prepared in the Quartermaster-General's Department in India, dated 1880, the following paragraph occurs:

> "Colonel Browne seems to think that our difficulties in Burma, both as regards opposition and supplies, will depend very much on the pre-declared intentions with which the force is sent. If it were proclaimed to the people that we mean to dethrone the King and annex the country, there would be no opposition to speak of, and provisions would be plentiful; cattle, wheat, grain and rice abound, and these would soon be brought in for sale if the people understood that we intended remaining."[182]

Colonel Sladen also wrote in 1885 that men and women of all degrees would not long regret the termination of Burmese rule if only they knew that the British would not subsequently leave their country putting on the throne a Burmese King who would punish their defection.[183]

Thus the idea of taking a decisive political action had been in the mind of the authorities. But this idea was not put into operation when the time came. On 1 January 1886 Upper Burma was incorporated into Her Majesty's dominions by the following proclamation of the Viceroy:

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[182] History of the Third Burmese War, Period 1, pp. 36-37. Colonel Browne was in charge of an expedition sent from Mandalay in 1875 to explore Western China.

[183] SC, Sladen's Report on "The Present Political Situation in Burma", pp. 53-58.

> "By command of the Queen-Empress it is hereby notified that the territories formerly governed by King Theebaw will no longer be under his rule, but have become part of Her Majesty's dominions, and will during Her Majesty's pleasure be administered by such Officers as the Viceroy and Governor-General of India may from time to time appoint."[184]

But this proclamation did not do anything to allay the suspicion of the Burmese people. The words that Upper Burma would be administered during Her Majesty's pleasure by such officers as the Viceroy might from time to time appoint led them to believe that it was still a question for future consideration.[185] Moreover, they knew that the question of putting a Burmese Prince on the throne was already under the consideration of the British Government, and that the minor son of Prince Nyaung Yan was generally supposed to have the best chance of being selected.[186]

So the people continued to remain in an unsettled frame of mind. During January some of the leading newspapers emphatically pointed out the evils of this state of affairs. The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget reported that 'dacoities' were increasing all round owing to the uncertainty as to what was in store in the future, and that the Burmese officials were afraid to act. The Pioneer Mail wrote that to leave the Burmans in a state of uncertainty as to their fate for several weeks was to tempt the restless spirits amongst them to defy what constituted authority might still exist, particularly

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[184] Cmd. 4614, p.266.

[185] The Pioneer Mail, 13 January 1886, p.41.

[186] Geary, op.cit., p.vi. Nyaung Yan is said to have been the favourite son of Mindon. He inherited his father's character and charm, and was very popular. See G.E.Harvey, "The Conquest of Upper Burma", The Cambridge History of India, vol. VI, pp. 436-439.

where it was not backed up on the spot by force.[187] The Times observed that until the future government was decided on, the population would remain in an excited and disturbed condition.[188]

These reports of the newspapers were also corroborated by General White and Mortimer Durand who was then Secretary to the Government of India. White, in a letter to his wife, wrote that the people were afraid to side with the British beyond the walls of Mandalay and that they were ready to throw in their lot with the British if the latter assured them that they would stay in Upper Burma permanently.[189] Durand wrote that the uncertainty of policy in itself was enough to prevent the establishment of order.[190]

Thus the authorities were fully aware of the effect of this uncertain state of affairs. But nothing could be done until Lord Dufferin visited Upper Burma and made an on-the-spot investigation of the situation. So the anti-British elements had sufficient time to enlist the support of many who were yet to take up arms against the British by pin-pointing this uncertainty of British policy. Thus the Myinzaing Prince, who was living in a monastery at the time of the occupation of Mandalay by the British, went out of Mandalay and quickly collected a large following so that by January 1886 he became the most determined opponent of the British.[191]

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[187] The Pioneer Mail, 13 January 1886, p.42.

[188] The Times, 8 January 1886, p.5.

[189] Durand, op.cit., vol. 1, p.321.

[190] Ibid., p.320.

[191] "The Pacification of Upper Burma, a Vernacular History", JBRS, p.83.

Like him, other Bos also such as Bo Shwe, U Ôktama and Buddha Yaza consolidated their position during this period of uncertainty. Indeed, a timely decision as to Upper Burma's future might have made the situation unfavourable to them.[192]

The official History of the War attributes this uncertainty of policy to, first, the unstable political situation in England and, secondly, the protracted negotiations of Lord Salisbury's Government with China on the latter's claim to suzerainty over Burma.[193] The first reason does not seem to be acceptable. It is true that the political situation in England between June 1885 and August 1886 presented a certain instability, and that three ministries headed by the Marquis of Salisbury and Gladstone were overthrown during this period. But an examination of the debates in both Houses of Parliament during January and February 1886, when Upper Burma was under the provisional government, shows that the Home Authorities, in spite of their preoccupations with the internal political situation, had taken an active interest in Burmese affairs. Several issues were raised and discussed in Parliament during those months, namely, the Provost Marshal's attempt to extort evidence from a Burman while the latter was covered by the presented rifles of a firing party,[194] the precise

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[192] Jagjit Singh Sidhu wrote that a timely decision could have made the war "one of the most inexpensive and bloodless" events in history, British Administration in Upper Burma, 1885-1897, unpublished M.A.Thesis (London 1963), p.57.

[193] History of the Third Burmese War, Period 1, p.53.

[194] Hansard, vol. 302, House of Lords, pp. 182, 274; House of Commons, pp. 188, 896.

nature of the relation between the Civil Authorities and the Military Authorities,[195] the execution of rebels or dacoits without trial,[196] the shooting of prisoners,[197] and the use of the Indian Revenue for conducting military operations.[198] The Secretary of State gave immediate consideration to each of these issues. The proceedings of the Home Authorities do not suggest anything which may support the theory that an early decision as to Upper Burma's future was not possible because of the Home Authorities' preoccupations.

The second reason, however, provides a reasonable explanation. The huge mass of official papers shows that right from the beginning Lord Salisbury's Government was much disturbed by the Chinese interference. China regarded Burma as her tributary State.[199] So, when the question of sending an expedition to Upper Burma was being seriously considered by Lord Dufferin, China proposed to offer her good offices to settle the dispute between the British and King Thibaw.[200] The Tsungli Yamên Prince[201] said to Sir Robert Hart, the Inspector General of the Imperial Maritime Customs and a trusted adviser of the Tsungli Yamên, that her claim to sovereignty

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[195] Hansard, vol. 302, House of Commons, pp. 188,314.

[196] Ibid., House of Commons, p.314.

[197] Ibid., House of Commons, p.316.

[198] Ibid., House of Lords, pp. 849-866; House of Commons, pp. 321-329, 944-948.

[199] HC, vol. 81, p.744, Lett. from O'Conor of the British Legation in Peking to Lord Dufferin, 28 October 1885.

[200] Ibid., p.511, Memorandum by Sir H.Macartney, English Sec. to Chinese Legation in London, to Sir J.Pauncefote, Permanent Under Sec. at the Foreign Office, 30 October 1885.

[201] Tsungli Yamên was the Foreign Office of the Imperial Chinese Government. It was the abbreviation of Tsung-li Ko-Kuo Shih-wu-ya-mên. See Iu So Yan-Kit, Anglo-Chinese Diplomacy Regarding Burma, 1885-1897 (London 1960), unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, p.32.

would compel China to interfere.[202] Although the Chinese proposal could not be accepted on the ground that an ultimatum had already been delivered to Thibaw,[203] the Chinese attitude was not lightly treated. Lord Randolph Churchill, the Secretary of State for India, wrote to the Viceroy on 5 November 1885:

> "If we annex Burmah at expense of quarrel with China, our commercial interests will profit very little, and ultimate results may be disastrous."[204]

So an attempt was made to soothe Chinese susceptibilities by sending a special Mission to Peking.[205] But the attempt failed because of China's refusal to accept any Mission. The Chinese Government, however, recognised military operations as inevitable.[206] They accepted the British position as far as the dethronement of Thibaw was concerned, but insisted that for any further arrangement their views should be taken into consideration.[207] The incorporation of Upper Burma into Her Majesty's dominions without any reference to China was not liked by the Chinese authorities. The Marquis Tseng of the Chinese Legation in London mentioned this action in a letter to Lord Salisbury, dated 1 January 1886,[208] while the Grand Secretary

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[202] HC, vol. 81, p.512, Tel. from Sir Robert Hart to James Duncan Campbell, then acting representative of the Chinese Customs Service in London, 1 November 1885.

[203] Ibid., p.516.

[204] Ibid., p.521.

[205] Ibid., p.523.

[206] Ibid., vol. 80, p.1011, O'Conor's Tel. 5 December 1885.

[207] Ibid., vol. 82, p.470, Tel. from Marquis Tseng to Salisbury, 12 December 1885.

[208] Ibid., pp. 202-203.

and Ministers of the Yamên showed uneasiness at this.[209] The British had by this time established to their own satisfaction the fact that according to a treaty of 1769 Burma's position in regard to China was that of a friend rather than of a tributary State and that both countries maintained their friendly relations through the exchange of envoys, presents, and letters every ten years.[210] So in January they entered into formal negotiations with China to bring about an arrangement on the basis of this fact. The negotiations continued until 24 July, 1886 when a Convention was signed by which it was agreed that the authorities in Burma would send the customary ten-yearly Missions to China on a basis of equality.[211]

Thus the Chinese interference undoubtedly put the Home Authorities in an embarrassing situation, particularly at a time when they were anxious for the good-will of China. But it was certainly not as serious as they had taken it to be. They had at least two occasions to realise this. They sent the Expeditionary Force to Upper Burma in spite of the Chinese offer of good offices and the Tsungli Yamên Prince's strong words. They annexed Upper Burma to Her Majesty's dominions in spite of the Chinese representations that excepting the dethronement of Thibaw any further arrangement should be preceded by an exchange of views between the two countries. On each of these occasions the Chinese reaction was only a mild protest.

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[209] HC, vol. 82, p.417, O'Conor's Tel., 7 January 1886.

[210] Ibid., vol. 80, pp. 53-54, Col. Yule's Note, 23 November 1885; vol. 81, p.723, Viceroy's Tel., 29 December 1885.

[211] Ibid., vol. 87, pp. 1260, 1302.

True, the Chinese posted guards and troops along their border,[212] but this was purely a security measure. There is not a single border incident on record which may suggest that the Chinese ever meant to send these troops across the border. Again, the terrain itself along the border was almost impassable. Thus Lord Dufferin wrote Lord Randolph Churchill as early as November 1885:

> "As a matter of fact, I do not see that the Chinese could really do us much harm. Though probably they have at this moment considerable armies in Yunnan, Yunnan is separated from Burmah by a considerable tract of very difficult country. Mr. Colquhoun describes it as almost impassable, so that if they came they would have no artillery with them, and could be readily repulsed."[213]

There was, however, a strong war party in China headed by the Canton Viceroy, Chang Chih-tung, the leader of the anti-foreign section of the official class.[214] It seems most likely that the recent war with the French over Tongking made the Chinese people, especially the members of the war party, more aggressive towards European Powers generally.[215] But the Chinese Government needed time before taking the risk of another war. "The Chinese Government", rightly observes Iu So Yan-kit, "convalescing as it was from its costly war with the French over Tongking, was in no position to undertake a test of strength with the British in Upper Burma."[216] This was perhaps the reason why the Tsungli Yamên turned down Marquis

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[212] HC, vol. 83, pp. 335, 1203, and vol. 86, pp. 166, 169.

[213] DP, Reel 517, No. 61.

[214] HC, vol. 86, p.166.

[215] Ibid., vol. 81, p.521. The Sino-French War ended by the Convention of June 1885.

[216] Iu So Yan-kit, op.cit., p.33.

Tseng's suggestion to settle the matter by force.[217] Since a war with Britain was out of the question at that stage, it would certainly be the best policy to keep her friendly, if necessary by allowing her to control the Valley of the Irrawaddy, as she would be the most ideal natural ally against France. Lord Dufferin appears to have been quite aware of the Chinese position. This is clear from Secretary of State Lord Kimberley's letter to the Queen-Empress, dated 23 November 1885:

> "China is our natural ally in this part of the world, both as against France and Russia. That the ascendancy of your Majesty's Government, however, should predominate in the valley of the Irrawaddy seems to Lord Dufferin the very thing which China should most desire."[218]

The explanation given above shows that the Home Authorities could have taken a decision regarding Upper Burma's future immediately after the occupation of Mandalay without risking the friendship of China. Of course, the matter depended much on the initiative of the Viceroy. The Viceroy, who knew what was really going on in Upper Burma, should have urged an early decision having let the Home Authorities know his views as to what he considered the best treatment of the Burmese Question. But he would not do this until he had visited Upper Burma and made personal inquiry into the condition of the country.[219] Thus he took about three months to pen his recommendations for a final decision.

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[217] Iu So Yan-kit, op.cit., p.34.

[218] DP, Reel 516, No. 28.

[219] Lyall, op.cit., vol. II, p.121.

If the failure to take a quick decision as to Upper Burma's future is attributed to the Home and Indian Authorities alike, the failure to organise a strong force of Burmese police rests exclusively on the Indian Authorities. Pacification, in the real sense of the term, depended on vigorous civil administration, which, in its turn, depended on a strong force of local police. But the British ignored this aspect right from the beginning. They came to Upper Burma with the pre-conceived notion that the Burmans could not be good policemen. This notion was formed out of their experience in Lower Burma. In Lower Burma the British were unable to raise an efficient police force. The Burman showed a considerable slackness when subjected to discipline.[220] His characteristic light-heartedness, his dislike for the job itself which he considered to be one of inferior quality,[221] and his unwillingness to serve away from the area of his birth[222] - all were responsible for this. But there were certain other things which should also be taken into consideration. First, the wages of police constables were very low. In spite of the expanding economy their minimum wages always lagged behind the basic rate for coolies.[223] Secondly, there was no regular system for police training. True, since 1868 police schools had been intermittently maintained, but they could not be

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[220] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.53.

[221] Janell Ann Nilsson, The Administration of British Burma, 1852-1885, unpublished Ph.D. Thesis (London 1970), p.253.

[222] Ibid., p.257.

[223] Ibid., pp. 254-255.

called "a regular introduction to police work".[224] Thirdly, promotion prospects were limited, and there were virtually no other incentives to good service.[225] Last, and not least, the number of the police engaged since 1862 was very small, while the country was large, some 87,220 square miles.[226] At the close of 1885 the number was only 7,160.[227] The result was that they proved too ineffective to prevent crime. Between 1880 and 1885 there was a steady increase in the crime-rate.[228] These factors were not taken into consideration. The administrators attributed the Burman's inefficiency to his character and convictions alone.

In Upper Burma also the British maintained the same view. Sir Charles Bernard's February 1886 Memorandum included a proposal to raise a Burman police force. But the attempt was half-hearted, so that by September in the same year only 1,384 Burmans were enlisted. Indeed, the pay offered to the constable was too small to attract the Burman to join the police force. Bernard thought that for a constable Rs. 10 a month was sufficient. This is why he had turned down the Hlutdaw's proposal for Rs. 12.[229] This was certainly not true economy, for money spent on various measures of pacification could be recouped out of the revenue demands as soon as the country was settled.

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[224] Nilsson, op.cit., p.258.

[225] Ibid., p.256.

[226] ARB, 1880-1881, p.5.

[227] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, [illegible] 1887 (Police), p.215.

[228] There were 18,898 cases in 1880, 20,522 cases in 1881, 23,061 in 1882, 23,740 in 1883, 27,897 in 1884 and 32,891 in 1885. See ARB, 1881-82, Part II, p.15; 1882-83, Part II, p.25; 1883-84, Part II, p.10; 1884-85, Part II, p.11 and 1885-86, Part II, p.10.

[229] PSCI, vol. 46, p.1129, Bernard's Letter No. 2R, 12 January 1886.

Indeed, Lord Dufferin should have given special consideration to the question of Burmese police. He had no problem of money. The whole Indian Revenue, according to the 55th section of the Act of 1858, was at his disposal. The consent of Parliament was not required as long as he could say that the war in Burma was waged "for preventing or repelling actual invasion of Her Majesty's Indian Possessions, or under other sudden and urgent necessity."[230] In February 1886 this condition was withdrawn by Resolution of Parliament,[231] and he was left absolutely independent of Parliament. The only obstacle was the Secretary of State. But the attitude of the Earl of Kimberley was clear in his despatch of 10 June 1886. With reference to the various arrangements proposed by the Viceroy in his Minute of 17 February, he said:

> "I have no wish in any way to hamper the discretion of Your Excellency in Council, and I shall only say that, though considerations of economy are at present of very pressing importance, they ought not to prevent your Government from applying for an increase of the establishment which has now been proposed."[232]

Thus the Viceroy could have paid a reasonable wage to the constable so as to make the service attractive. But he seems to have given more importance to the military police than to the Burmese police.[233] Indeed, quite a large number of military police were brought in from India. But they could never be a proper substitute. Their role was one of a quasi-military nature. Moreover, they were

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[230] Hansard, vol. 302, House of Commons, 25 January 1886, p.324.

[231] Ibid., pp. 849, 855, 866.

[232] Cmd. 4887, 1886, p.47.

[233] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p. 21.

foreigners; they did not know the language of the people nor did they have any idea of their customs and convictions. The Civil Authorities could hardly expect from them the kind of assistance which a Burmese civil police force could easily render, and their behaviour with the local people was sometimes so bad that it betrayed the fundamental principles of police administration.

In fact, the organisation of a large Burman police force right from the beginning, even with the minimum training and discipline, would have contributed much to the work of pacification. There was, of course, a certain unwillingness on the part of the Burman to serve away from the area of his birth. But adequate wage and promotion prospects might have induced him to accompany the troops in every operation both as a guide and a combatant. Apart from this, the fact of his wearing uniform would have certainly led his fellow villagers to think that things were not controlled by the kalas alone.

The unrest in Upper Burma, which could have been considerably reduced by an early decision as to the country's future and by the organisation of a strong force of Burmese police, was also intensified by certain excesses on the part of the British in their treatment of the Burmese. As to the Military Police, numerous cases of extortion and oppression, particularly those of taking money or food by force, were reported. The following extract from the report of J.E.Bridges, Deputy Commissioner of Mandalay, is worth noting:

> "The conduct of the military police, especially of the levy, has hardly been conciliatory towards the people..... [large-turbaned men]are looked upon with

> fear and dislike by the Burmans. There have been numerous complaints made against them....The complaints generally were that the Punjabis, who had no respect whatever for private property, ... levied blackmail on all carts and persons passing their guards and walked into bazaars and helped themselves to eatables and other goods which took their fancy and carried them away without paying for them."[234]

The Inspector General of Police, W.W.Daly, gave the following explanation:

> "They came to a newly conquered country without at first proper officers to look after them, and it is quite possible that they may have taken a few liberties which most men under the circumstances would have indulged in. Complaints were, it is true, made against them in some cases, but as time has gone on, they have been fewer and fewer."[235]

But however reasonable Daly's explanation may have been, such acts on the part of the military police had considerably damaged the work of pacification. The authorities were however quick to punish those guilty of misconduct. Thus in Mandalay, one Hindustani Policeman was dismissed and sentenced to imprisonment because he threw a Burmese woman into the water for her refusal to meet his views about the price of some fruit,[236] while another policeman was also sentenced to rigorous imprisonment because he assaulted two young Burmese girls and demanded money from one of them and dragged her along the road.[237] Thus the authorities were not indifferent to such misconduct. But the damage had already been done; terrorised people - men, women and children- ran at the sight of a policeman.

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[234] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Police), p.72. Similar complaints against the military police were reported by the District authorities of Lower Burma, ibid., pp. 82-86, 88.

[235] Ibid., p.70.

[236] Ibid., p.64.

[237] Ibid., p.73.

As to the soldiers, they behaved abominably, especially during the first few months of the occupation; they got drunk and ran after Burmese girls in the bazaars; they did not even pay for things they took.[238] Thus fiftyeight of the Royal Scottish Fusiliers got fourteen days C.B. (confinement to barracks), each for disobedience of orders in ill-treating Burmans and destroying property.[239]

Government policy itself appeared to be somewhat high-handed. All persons engaged in pillage or found in possession of arms were shot.[240] Such a policy was a great blunder. The report quickly spread that troops were shooting everywhere, and terrorised people abandoned their villages and took to the dense jungle or hill-country, and formed pockets of resistance.[241] This is clear from Lieut.-Colonel Baker's report, dated 24 March 1886: "The villagers bolted as soon as our men were seen, leaving nearly everything in their houses, shouting and firing a few shots quite out of range."[242] Thus one practical outcome of the severities resorted to was that the villagers fought more desperately than they had done at the outset.

Government policy is also said to have been high-handed with regard to prisoners. The subject has not, however, been properly studied so that there is a good deal of confusion about this. Professor Hall is silent on this subject.[243] Professor Cady has made

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[238] Minayeff, op.cit., pp. 138, 142, 154; Geary, op.cit., p.108.

[239] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, p.58.

[240] Geary, op.cit., pp. 45, 69, 248.

[241] Ibid., pp. 69, 232-233.

[242] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, p.47.

[243] D.G.E.Hall, A History of South-East Asia (London 1955), 2nd edition, Chapter 40.

only a passing reference to it.[244] Professors Htin Aung and Sarkisyanz have referred to great atrocities, but the former has not mentioned any source while the latter's sources are too limited to support a balanced judgement.[245] There appear to have been two categories of prisoners: first, those who were shot out of hand in the course of the military operations and, secondly, those who were executed at Mandalay and elsewhere after summary trial. As to the first category, Geary observed some sort of indiscriminate shooting. The military papers also give occasional references to the shooting of prisoners out of hand. Indeed, it is not unlikely that a considerable number of prisoners were shot in the course of the military operations, as might have happened elsewhere in the world during such war of annexation. But the charge of mass killing cannot be reliably established from the limited sources available. The soldiers operating in an unknown difficult country, being in many cases absolutely cut off from their units, and under a constant fear of being ambushed, may well have thought that burdening themselves with prisoners would be a great mistake both in respect of security and supply. So in many cases they shot them out of hand.[246] It was unquestionably a brutal policy, and its effect, so far as the pacification was concerned, was disastrous. But, as Dr. Maung Maung says in this connection, "wars are cruel, and during wars, and in their aftermath, passions, not laws, are apt to rule."[247] The

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[244] Cady, op.cit., pp. 133-134.

[245] Maung Htin Aung, The Stricken Peacock, p.94: A History of Burma (New York, London 1967), p.266; E.Sarkisyanz, Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution, pp. 101-102. Sarkisyanz has based his observation on the accounts of Geary and Minayeff and one or two reports of The Times.

[246] Geary, op.cit., p.248.

[247] Maung Maung, Burma in the Family of Nations (Amsterdam 1956), p.71.

rebels also, when they got the opportunity, showed a similar brutality; they did not even spare the lives of innocent Europeans like Messrs. Walker, Mobart, Calogreedy, Gray, Bruce and Gordon.[248]

As to the second category of prisoners, Minayeff, who had been in Upper Burma only for a few days early in 1886, wrote that every day a few 'dacoits' were executed.[249] Colonel Sladen's private papers show that between 28 November 1885 and 1 February 1886 only twenty-two prisoners were executed. All had been tried in a more or less summary manner: five by the Superintendent of Police with the city magistrate, thirteen by the Deputy Commissioner, and four by Colonel Sladen and the Hlutdaw.[250] These accounts do not give any picture of mass execution.[251] There are, however, at least two cases on record connected with these executions, in which the authorities seem to have committed excesses which violated the very principles of humanity. The Times of 29 January 1886 reported that five prisoners were executed and their naked and blood-stained bodies were carried through the streets in order to terrorise the people.[252] This report is corroborated by Minayeff.[253] In the same month, a certain prince named Mingundaing was executed with three followers. The charge against him was that he was captured

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[248] Cmd. 4887, pp. 59, 61, 76.

[249] Minayeff, op.cit., p.138.

[250] SC, letters from Fforde, Superintendent of Police, and Sladen, dated 17 and 18 March 1886 respectively.

[251] These executions, however, cover only those which had taken place at Mandalay. There is no record of executions having taken place in the same manner at other garrison towns.

[252] The Times, 29 January 1886, p.5.

[253] Minayeff, op.cit., p.138.

while resisting the British in arms. But from Sir Charles Bernard's private letters to Colonel Sladen it appears that the Prince gave himself up to Captain Woodward of the Naval Brigade on condition that his life would be spared. In his letter of 8 January, Bernard wrote:

> "If the man had been taken in arms, actually making rebellion, and had then and there been executed, the course so taken could have been upheld. But if he surrendered, or was captured without violence, then we shall have to make out against him some offence such as would, under the analogy of the I.P.C. [Indian Penal Code], warrant his being sentenced to death."[254]

In a subsequent letter of 13 January, he wrote:

> "Capt. Woodward's opinion that the Pretender would not be sentenced to death was in no sense a promise on the faith of which the man came in or surrendered."[255]

From this second letter it is clear that the Prince was not captured in arms and that he came in because he was told that he would not be sentenced to death. But the authorities were anxious to execute him. So a case was made out against him, as suggested by Bernard in his first letter. It was recorded in the official papers that the Prince was defeated by a Burmese official, and afterwards cleverly captured in arms with thirteen followers by another official and that Sladen passed sentence of death against him and three followers.[256]

Pragmatism, perhaps, from a purely British point of view, necessitated the execution, for events proved how dangerous an

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[254] SC, Bernard's Letter, 8 January 1886.

[255] Ibid., Bernard's Letter, 13 January 1886.

[256] HC, vol. 83, p.351.

'Alompra' prince could be. But the act was highly immoral; it was also harmful to the work of pacification. It was not unlikely that the followers of the Mingundaing Prince knew that their leader gave himself up to the British on an assurance from the latter. So they naturally lost faith in British promises. This might be one of the reasons why Bernard's proclamation of March 1886 offering pardon to men who would submit did not produce any good result.[257]

It is very difficult to say how many incidents like those of carrying the blood-stained bodies through the streets and executing a prisoner in disregard of a promise of life had taken place in Upper Burma. But this much can be said, that there were always certain powerful checks against excesses. First, as has already been noted, the British Parliament had taken a keen interest in Burmese affairs throughout the period. It was never prepared to allow the authorities in India and Burma so much latitude as would enable the latter to do anything they liked and thereby damage British reputation abroad. This is clear from its reaction to Provost Marshal Lieut. Colonel Hooper's attempts in January to extort evidence from a Burman while the latter was covered by the presented rifles of a firing party and to take photographs of the persons executed at the precise moment when they were struck by the bullets.

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[257] In this connection two other incidents are worth noting. In December 1885 a certain Wun of Pyinmana proceeded to surrender to the British with his followers. He was tied with a chain, and very roughly handled, "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, p.81. A similar incident occurred in 1886. One Tha Aung, an ex-Thugyi and son-in-law of Bo Shwe, came close to Minhla and sent in word that he desired to make submission. A police inspector went out and brought him in. He was sentenced to transportation for life, BHP, vol. 2035, January 1887 (Public), p.42, Bernard's Note on Minhla.

In the House of Lords, Lord Ripon said:

> "I earnestly trust that my noble Friend /Secretary of State for India/ will make inquiry without delay into the truth of these allegations, so that if they are inaccurate, the character of this officer /Colonel Hooper/ may be cleared... but if, unhappily, they turn out to be correct, that measures may be taken not only to put a stop to those proceedings, but to mark in a most signal manner the sentiments of Her Majesty's Government with regard to them."[258]

Similarly, in the House of Commons, Dr. Cameron, member for Glasgow, asked the Secretary of State "whether he will telegraph to the authorities in India calling their attention to the allegation with a view, if it be found to be true, to the immediate suppression of the practice and the prosecution of the Provost Marshal".[259] Justin Huntly M'Carthy, member for Newry, asked "whether the Secretary of State has taken or intends to take any action in the matter".[260]

Thus Parliament had taken a serious note of the incident. It would however be wrong to suppose that Colonel Hooper had done this with the concurrence of the authorities at Mandalay. General Prendergast himself had censured the conduct of Hooper "as unbecoming a military officer entrusted with the discharge of a grave military duty".[261] Moreover, all further military executions in Burma were forthwith stopped.[262] The office of the Provost Marshal was abolished and the Government even thought of placing Hooper under court martial.[263] This could not however be done. The Judge Advocate

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[258] Hansard, vol. 302, p.182.

[259] Ibid., p.186.

[260] Ibid., p.188.

[261] SC, Memorandum No. 134, 25 January 1886.

[262] Cmd 4690., p.8. The following extract from Bernard's letter of Instructions issued to Sladen on 18 February when the former left Mandalay on leave is worth noting: "that no prisoner taken after a fight or on an expedition, should be sentenced to death unless he is clearly a dacoit leader or has clearly been guilty of murder. We do not want any more men sentenced to death for mere rebellion". SC, Bernard's Instructions.

[263] Cmd. 4690., p.11.

gave opinion that as Lieut.-Colonel Hooper was ordered back to regimental duty, that officer would have good grounds for pleading that his case had been already adjudicated upon, and that if now brought to trial before a court martial, it was probable a conviction could not be obtained against him.[264]

Secondly, the presence of K. Moylan, the Special Correspondent of The Times, in Mandalay, was also a great check against atrocities. Moylan was on extremely bad terms with the Mandalay authorities. He had been ordered out of Mandalay by General Prendergast on charges of violating rules for reporters in December 1885. But with the permission of the Secretary of State he came back in January 1886. Thereafter, he became the most violent critic of British policy, and he maintained this stand throughout his stay in Burma. So far as the excesses of the military policy are concerned, Moylan reported only one serious incident, namely, that of the shooting of five prisoners and dragging their bodies through the streets, published in The Times of 29 January. If there were any more incidents like that they would have certainly been reported by him. It may, however, be argued that Moylan was perhaps advised by the Editor of The Times not to send any more reports on shooting, because the policy of the paper during this period was to support Imperial interests.[265] But the argument is nullified on the ground that Moylan's subsequent reports and activity on other matters were no less harmful to the Imperial interests. Thus in April 1886 he condemned the behaviour of

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[264] MMLD vol. 135, M 6500/1886, p.3.

[265] The History of the Times (London 1947), vol. III, p.17. The Times' imperialistic stand was clearly seen at the time of the Egyptian crisis. It was determined to see that "English influence" remained "paramount". This is why it did not support Gladstone's policy to withdraw troops from Egypt. Ibid., pp. 18, 20.

the Police Sergeant, Maung Myat Tha, in connection with the murder of Maung Tauk, a petty silk dealer;[266] in June he questioned the proceedings of the civil authorities in Mandalay as to the sale of some crown lands to some high officials[267] and, in July, he challenged the proceedings of the Deputy Commissioner of Mandalay in the cases of Nga San Win and Haji Mirza Muhammad Ali and reported that the right of appeal secured by law was denied to prisoners in Upper Burma.[268] In fact, Moylan appears to have been a constant source of trouble to the British authorities. The Viceroy himself was much annoyed with him. Sir Charles Crosthwaite confessed in a private letter to Thirkell White that Moylan was "certainly doing his best to raise the country against me".[269]

Thirdly, there was the Rev. James Colbeck, the representative in Mandalay of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Colbeck addressed a public protest to the Chief Commissioner against Colonel Hooper's proceedings.[270]

Lastly, any mass killing might have created a violent world reaction. In February 1886 the International Arbitration and Peace Association had fiercely condemned the military executions of prisoners

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[266] IUBP, vol. 2720, August 1886 (Judicial), pp. 22, 27, 29.

[267] The Times, 28 June 1887.

[268] Nga San Win was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and he was denied the right of appeal, while a portion of Mirza Muhammad Ali's land was forcibly taken by the Deputy Commissioner of Mandalay.

[269] HTWP, vol. 10, Mss. Eur. E 254, India Office Library.

[270] The Times, 21 January 1886, p.5. Colbeck succeeded Rev. Dr. J.E.Marks in 1875. Marks stayed in Mandalay until the death of King Mindon, but the massacres in the palace and the troubled state in the city made it necessary for all British subjects to leave, so in 1879 the Mission was evacuated. In January 1886 Colbeck came up with the troops.

and demanded a parliamentary enquiry.[271]

If the charge of the mass execution of prisoners cannot be definitely established, the charge of indiscriminate burning of villages by the troops can be decisively proved. The diaries of the Field Force show that almost every military operation, during the first few months of the occupation, was accompanied by the burning of villages. The idea was to destroy the villages which were suspected of harbouring 'dacoits'. This burning of villages seems to have been the act of over-zealous young officers rather than one committed in accordance with a policy of the Government. This is clear from the report of Lieut.-Colonel Ommanney, commanding Pagan, to the Assistant Adjutant General, Mandalay, dated 14 March 1886. The Colonel wrote:

> "in my opinion the burning of the large village of Popa was a great mistake, and did no end of harm. The village was taken by Lieutenant Seton, and burnt by Mr. Martin's orders. The villagers are unable to prevent the rebels occupying their villages, and had Lieutenant Seton occupied the village, the inhabitants could have been utilized by being employed in carrying up stores from the plains ... The whole place has been burnt, and the inhabitants turned out to live how they can. Again on the same day as Popa was burnt Captain Eyre burnt the village of Natha ... these burnt out villagers turn dacoits in order to maintain themselves and families."[272]

Such an act of burning was severely condemned by General White.[273] In March 1886, strict orders were issued forbidding the burning of villages as a punitive measure.[274] But in spite of this, the

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[271] HC, vol. 83, p.863. The President of the Association was the Earl of Shaftesbury.

[272] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, p.23.

[273] Ibid., p.78.

[274] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.5.

practice continued, though not on a large scale. Thus in October 1886 General White wrote to Brigadier-General Lockhart:

> "After leaving villagers at the mercy of dacoits, who take all they have, we reassert our power spasmodically, drive off the dacoits, and compensate the villagers for their losses by burning their villages."[275]

The effect of the excesses committed during the first few months of the occupation was clearly felt during the later half of 1886. Fielding Hall who was in Upper Burma during this time and had had the opportunity to accompany the troops in several operations observed that the whole country was up against the British.[276] The situation was aggravated to such an extent that a protracted struggle appeared to be inevitable.

The hardships which the British had passed through during these first ten months could have been greatly minimised and the task of pacification advanced if right from the beginning they had not been guided by certain wrong assumptions as to the proportion, nature and strength of Burmese resistance. The organisers of the Upper Burma Campaign thought that the Expeditionary Force would meet little or no resistance, and that some 10,000 well-trained soldiers equipped with modern weapons would be more than sufficient to pacify the country. Thus they ignored all past records and experiences and thereby committed a great blunder which made the history of these ten months' military operations one of dreary misfortune. The possibility of a tough resistance by the Upper Burmans in the event of their country being invaded was first pointed out by Major

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[275] Durand, vol. 1, op.cit., p.353.

[276] See below, pp.147-148.

Snodgrass in 1827:

> "The conquest of the capital of Alompra, it was urged by some, would have had a good effect upon the whole Eastern world. But those best acquainted with the strange people we had to deal with, are well aware, that every sacrifice they were disposed to make, was to ensure the preservation of the city."[277]

Lord Dalhousie also observed a strong sense of "pride" among the Burmans and pointed out that the entire subjugation of Burma would be "most injurious to the interests of the British Government".[278] Besides these, the kind of resistance which the British had encountered in Pegu after its conquest in 1852 should have provided the organisers of the Upper Burma Campaign with the most pointed warning. Pegu was only 9,299 square miles,[279] but for four years no British officer could go from one place to another without an escort.[280] So Upper Burma, which was several times greater and which was the cradle of the Burmese race, was likely to give far more trouble. Again, Upper Burma, as distinguished from Pegu or Lower Burma as a whole, had certain characteristics of her own, which made a tougher resistance inevitable. Lower Burma when annexed was simply a large tract of country thinly populated with differing races, with no central authority, no recognised customs, no cohesion. But Upper Burma was a nation with the traditions, the customs, and authority of many centuries. In annexing Upper Burma the British took over a nation which, though primitive

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[277] Major Snodgrass, Narrative of the Burmese War (London 1827), pp. 284-285. Major Snodgrass, an officer of Sir Archibald Campbell's Army, fought in the First Burmese War.

[278] Col. W.F.B.Laurie, Our Burmese Wars (London 1880), p.286.

[279] Notes and Statistics (Rangoon 1890), Part II, p.34.

[280] DF, Reel 516, No. 48.

perhaps, was nevertheless a complete organism with an old-established system of government, both local and central, and an organised religious establishment.[281]

The British seem to have ignored all these facts and past experiences. Although Lord Dufferin himself believed that 10,000 troops would be more than sufficient, he left the matter in the hands of the men on the spot. From November 1885 to February 1886 he repeatedly asked the Authorities in Burma whether more troops were needed.[282] But both Bernard and Prendergast held the view that the force was ample for all requirements.[283] The situation, on the other hand, proved that the force was far too small to meet all requirements. The signs of a stiff resistance were already visible by the end of December 1885, and by the beginning of January 1886 the movement, as reported by The Times, was rapidly developing into a national rising. But the Authorities classed the entire body of insurgents as 'dacoits' and by so doing they ignored the real nature of the resistance and wasted valuable time when they should have asked for reinforcements.

There were of course numerous dacoits and free-booters. But those who were putting up the real resistance could by no means be called 'dacoits', if judged by their motives. There were the Princes

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[281] H.Fielding Hall, A People at School, p.5.

[282] MMLD, vol. 137, M 2048, p.2. It seems that Dufferin became a little anxious to raise the number of the Expeditionary Force after receiving a letter from Churchill. Churchill wrote that he had had a conversation with General Duncan and that the latter, who had great experience about Burma, told him that the occupation of Mandalay would be but a very short step to the reduction of the country and that a very large garrison would be required for years. DP, Reel 517, Letter from Churchill, 18 November 1885.

[283] MMLD, vol. 137, M 2048, pp. 2-3.

of the blood royal. True, they were fighting each for his own hand, and his own personal ascendancy. But that was the traditional pattern of power struggle. Even Lord Dufferin admitted that these Princes and their followers were entitled to claim a more honourable designation.[284] There were the pongyis like Ôktama in the north and Mayankyaung in the south. There were the disbanded soldiers. These men were fighting under one Prince or another with the hope that in the event of their leader sitting on the throne they would get back their job. General Prendergast, who in his official capacity hardly called them 'rebels', wrote later on that it was absurd and unjust to class whole divisions of troops in the field as 'dacoits'.[285] There were the ex-officials like Wun-daw-hmu U Paung. When the war broke out U Paung was in the Shan States, commanding a regiment. Immediately after the fall of Mandalay he came down from the Shan States with a large number of weapons and joined the Myinzaing Prince.[286] This man was certainly not a dacoit.

There were, above all, scores of other leaders like Bo Shwe and Hla U. The Authorities were not prepared to call them 'rebels'. But the numerical strength which each of them commanded from time to time put them far above the category of dacoits. Bo Shwe, for instance, required a brigade to check him.[287] Indeed, he became

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[284] Cmd. 4887, 1886, p.25, Viceroy's Minute.

[285] Gen. Sir H.N.D.Prendergast, "Burman Dacoity and Patriotism and Burman Politics", Asiatic Quarterly Review, New Series, vol. 5, 1893, p.276.

[286] "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A vernacular History", p.82; Cmd. 4962, p.195.

[287] The Times, 2 September 1886, p.5.

so powerful that one British officer had gone so far as to suggest that he should be pardoned and made Magistrate of his tract.[288]

These were the men - princes, pongyis, ex-officials, soldiers, and powerful bos - who had dominated the scene on the Burmese side right from the beginning. True, their resistance lacked cohesion, but their purpose was clearly to expel the British. But the British did not admit this. They were not prepared to accept the fact that the Burmans, like all other peoples in the world, were more ready to bear the vices of their Native Rulers than the virtues of foreign officials.

The British not only ignored the possibility and nature of the resistance, they also underestimated the strength of their opponents. They thought that the Burmans who were opposing them had little or no will to fight.[289] This was certainly a wrong assumption. The Burmans were fighting guerrilla war and this is why they rarely met their enemy in the open field. They were instructed and trained from their youth in the formation and defence of stockades and, indeed, they displayed great skill and judgement in this.[290] They knew that the enemy passing close to their stockades could be more easily defeated than in a face to face battle in the open plains. The latter kind of war was, they might have reasonably thought, still more dangerous when the enemy was equipped with

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[288] BMP, vol. 2664A, October 1886 (Military), p.1.

[289] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions, vol. V, p.181.

[290] Snodgrass, op.cit., p.21.

effective firearms.[291] So they avoided face to face confrontation as far as possible. This does not mean that they had no will to fight. There are at least some records in the diaries and journals of the Field Force which show that when opportunity came they took the offensive and showed a great deal of gallantry. Two instances may be given. In April, Kyaukmyaung was attacked by the rebels. The attack was made with great daring, the rebels coming right inside the military post, and a few getting under the Kyaungs and firing up through the floor.[292] In May 1886, some 1,000 rebels attacked Capt. Jackson's force near Myingyan. They fought with great stubbornness, and only retired when the fighting line was within forty yards of them and their flank turned.[293] It is a fact that in almost every case British arms were successful against the rebels, but these successes were, at times, dearly purchased. Between 1 June and 31 July 1886 Phayre, Capt. Dunsford, Lt. Shubrick and Capt. Atkinson were killed in action, while Major Hailes, Lt. Churchill, Capt. Grant, Capt. Wilbraham, Capt. Preston, Lt. Peacock and Lt. Ayerst were severely wounded.

The military operations in Upper Burma did not call for the display of any military genius on the battle field. What they required were the physical stamina of the officers and men and their moral qualities of courage, fortitude, alertness and patience. The

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[291] "Burman Dacoity and Patriotism and Burman Politics", Asiatic Quarterly Review, p.275.

[292] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, p.97.

[293] Ibid., vol. 960 M 7198/1886, p.7.

military records show that none of these qualities was wanting. The officers and men endured all sorts of odds and inconveniences with a cheerful and soldierlike spirit. If only a proper assessment of the situation had been made right from the beginning, and adequate troops employed on that basis, the course of events might have been changed.

It is a commonplace of historical generalisation that a conquered people begin to appreciate the rule of the conquerors only after the latter have displayed clear evidence of their power. In Upper Burma such evidence was undoubtedly lacking. The Reports of the Deputy Commissioners dated September 1886 contained a note of optimism, no doubt, but they at the same time presented the overall situation as being far from satisfactory.[294] The remarks of some Deputy Commissioners are worth quoting. The Deputy Commissioner of Myingyan said: "It is too early to say at present whether the people generally appreciate our rule."[295] The Deputy Commissioner of Kyaukse said: "I have seen nothing that I can honestly call an indication that the people appreciate our rule."[296] The Mandalay Commissioner said still more categorically: "I can give no instance of any real assistance rendered by the people in breaking up gangs of dacoits: we have had to trust entirely to ourselves."[297] These

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[294] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), pp. 60-106.

[295] Ibid., p.95.

[296] Ibid., p.91.

[297] Ibid., p.62.

remarks show that the army engaged was too small to create any impression in the minds of the people. The people would have come forward to co-operate with the British only if they were given the impression that resistance was useless.

True, hatred for the foreigners who had invaded and occupied the country was a common thing, but how long homeless and starving people could resist a powerful invading army with a genuine patriotic feeling is a matter to be considered. The war was followed by widespread economic depression. There was no trade, no business, and no harvest. On the top of this, all that the people had in reserve was destroyed in the course of subsequent operations by the British troops and the rebels. The sufferings of the people knew no bounds. Under the circumstances, a prolonged resistance by the people was unthinkable. But they continued to resist, because crucifixion on charge of collaboration was far more terrible than starvation. They were convinced that the British would not be able to protect them.[298] So they were disposed to aid the rebels rather than the British.[299] Of course, villages situated within the closest proximity of the military posts were quite secure. Here the Thugyis came forward to submit to the British, and the villagers carried on trade and cultivation and paid taxes. But the number of

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[298] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), Notes on Kyaukse p.23. The official papers give numerous cases of thugyis being carried off or crucified and villages looted and burnt on charge of collaboration. About the guides, Sir J.G.Scott wrote that they were murdered, others had their ears chopped off; the more fortunate only had their cattle stolen and their houses burnt, Burma (London 1924), pp. 340-341. Occasionally a few of them were tattooed across the forehead with "Do not serve the English; do not show them the way", IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.79.

[299] Geoffrey Rawson, Road to Mandalay (New York 1967), p.230.

such villages was very limited.

Thus, apart from certain natural difficulties under which the British had to work in Upper Burma, there were several other causes of the failure of the British arms to pacify the country during the first ten months of the occupation. The aggravation of the situation necessitated extended military operations during the cold season of 1886-1887.

Chapter Four

COLD SEASON OPERATIONS, 1886-1887

The cold season operations were to commence from about the middle of November, 1886. The basic objective of the operations, as laid down by Sir Frederick Roberts, the Commander in Chief of the Indian Army, was to break up various 'rebel bands' infesting the plains of Upper Burma.[1] It was a colossal task. The situation did not indicate the slightest sign of improvement. The Government of India, however, reported to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India on 19 October, 1886 "that the progress already made is, on the whole, very satisfactory".[2] Paradoxically, October itself, according to official returns, turned out to be one of the worst months in the history of the pacification of Upper Burma. Most of the districts were disturbed.[3] Loyal Thugyis and Wuns were murdered in different parts of the country, and frequent 'dacoities' were committed, especially in the eastern parts of the Mandalay district.[4] November also presented an almost similar situation.[5] Thus Fielding Hall, who was in Upper Burma during this time, observed:

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[1] MLEI, vol. 991, M 5569/1887, p.6, Note on the Present Military Situation in Upper Burma by Sir Frederick Roberts, 24 November 1886.

[2] Cmd. 4962, 1887, Further Correspondence in continuation of 4887, p.113, Parliamentary Papers.

[3] Ibid., pp. 132, 134-135.

[4] In one single week of October 1886 eight 'dacoities' were committed in the eastern parts of the Mandalay district, ibid., p.134.

[5] Ibid., pp. 166-167, 191, 243-244. During October and November 1886 about 200 cases of 'robbery' and 'dacoity' were officially reported.

> "The Burmese people had risen throughout Upper Burma. In every district there was a ferment and a movement. Posts were attacked everywhere, convoys were fired on, every village was a centre of disaffection, and every villager was ready to fight."[6]

This situation is also corroborated by the reports of the newspapers. The Pioneer Mail reported that an impartial consideration of the situation would force one to the conclusion that instead of the pacification of the country progressing its condition was rapidly becoming worse.[7] The Times reported considerable activity on the part of the insurgents.[8]

This state of affairs might well lead to the conclusion that the military operations which had so far been undertaken were absolutely fruitless. This would, however, be far from correct. The official papers show that, before the end of October 1886, the British were able, in one way or another, to get rid of several prominent leaders of resistance, in addition to numerous minor bo/s. Thus in July Nga Mye Gyi of Ye-U, after his defeat at Kanbya, retreated into the deep jungles of the Mahamyaing forest, never to give trouble again;[9] in August Tha Pwe of Shwebo, the boldest lieutenant of Nga Yaing, was killed in action at Pithugyi,[10] while

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[6] H.Fielding Hall, A People at School (London 1906), p.81.

[7] The Pioneer Mail (Allahabad),27 October 1886, p.526.

[8] The Times, 2 November 1886, p.5; 9 November 1886, p.5; 15 November 1886, p.5.

[9] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.81.

[10] There seems to be a little confusion about Tha Pwe's death. The Deputy Commissioner of Shwebo reported early in September 1886 that Tha Pwe was killed in action in August 1886, ibid., p.64. This is corroborated by other official reports and publications such as the 1886 October Report of Thirkell White, ibid., p.55; ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, pp.10; and Burma Gazetteer: Lower Chindwin District (Rangoon 1912), p.22. But Sir J.G.Scott observed that Tha Pwe was alive long after August 1886, Burma (London 1924), p.339. This, however, does not seem to be correct, for official papers after August 1886 do not present Tha Pwe as alive.

the Myinzaing Prince, hunted down from place to place, took shelter at a remote village in the Natteik Pass, and died of fever;[11] in September Nga Mya of Ye-u was captured[12] and in October Prince Maung Hmat Kyi was killed in action.[13] These were no mean achievements. But, as a rule, the work of pacification cannot progress unless such results are followed up and consolidated by further measures designed to retain the day-to-day control of territory. The British were certainly well aware of this. As the Deputy Commissioner of Ye-u wrote:

> "If the excellent results produced by our frequent expeditions could only be followed up and confirmed by establishing outposts to control the more disaffected parts of the district, the work of bringing it into order would be very much reduced, and the larger dacoit gangs would be repressed in a comparatively short space of time."[14]

But unfortunately for the British, this could not be done because of the shortage of man-power. Consequently, those excellent results were quickly neutralised by the emergence of new leaders everywhere.

It is not possible to say actually how many leaders were operating throughout Upper Burma on the eve of the cold season operations. The number must have been considerable. Indeed, it was a time when men of adventurous disposition sprang up out of nothing and quickly gained power and influence. The September Reports of the Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and District Officers, prepared in view of the

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[11] Cmd. 4962, p.21.

[12] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.81.

[13] MLEI, vol. 965, M 130/1887, p.11, and Scott, Burma, p.337.

[14] IUBP, vol. 2720, September 1886 (Public), p.21, Deputy Commissioner's Letter to the Chief Commissioner, 20 July 1886.

ensuing operations, give not less than one hundred names.[15] Some additional names also occur in the military papers. The lists include princes of the blood royal, Wuns, Myothugyis, Thugyis, Nakans, pongyis, adventurers and charlatans. Of these the Myothugyis, Thugyis and pongyis were undoubtedly the most powerful elements in the Burmese resistance. These men, because of their traditional position in the society, were always in a position to command a considerable following. So they turned out to be the best source of recruitment for the rebel princes and other formidable leaders of resistance. Thus, to give only two instances, Maung Tha, the Thugyi of Pyingyi, went out with a large body of followers to join a certain prince,[16] while Buddha Yaza owed much of his influence to pongyi Nga Hmat of Yedan.[17]

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[15] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), pp. 60-111.

[16] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.73.

[17] Ibid., p.104. In Chapter Two (p.67) reference has already been made to pongyi participation in the resistance on an individual basis. During the first ten months of the 'pacification' British officers like Thirkell White and J.G.Scott, who were intimately connected with the work of pacification, realised the importance of the monks. White wrote that, wherever there was an appearance of organised resistance, Buddhist monks were among the chiefs, A Civil Servant in Burma (London, 1913), p.161. Scott wrote that there was a number of pongyi bohs who claimed to be defending religion, Burma, p.338. These observations are corroborated by other sources such as MLEI, vol. 967, M 1162, p.3: vol. 968, M 4306/1887, p.13; vol. 969, M 4792/1887, p.3; vol. 973, M 10260, week ending 13 August 1887; The Times, 23 January 1886, p.5; Minayeff, Travels in and Diaries of India & Burma, translated by Hirendranath Sanyal (Calcutta), p.151; Cmd. 4962, p.85. These sources mention several specific cases of pongyis being, in one way or another, associated with the resistance. In Lower Burma, also, several pongyis such as the Mayankyaung Pongyi and the Kyaukkalat Pongyi were causing trouble to the British, JLEI, vol. 325, pp. 53, 55; D.M.Smeaton, The Loyal Karens of Burma (London 1887), pp. 13-14.

The British, of course, realised the importance of these men. From the beginning they had persistently tried to enlist their support. On his first arriving in the district each Deputy Commissioner made it his first duty to summon the headmen of villages around and persuade them to be loyal to the new regime. An example was also occasionally set by way of rewarding a loyal Wun or Thugyi. The Deputy Commissioner of Katha, for instance, arranged for the son of the loyal Lyadaung Wun a grant to study for three years at the Rangoon College.[18] The pongyis were also treated with the utmost care. The district administrators tried to convince them that the British did not mean to destroy their religion. As a gesture of good intention, money was spent to build monasteries in place of those occupied by the soldiers.[19] Whether through appreciation of these generous acts or through fear of British arms, many headmen and some pongyis[20] submitted to the British. But

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[18] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.14, the Chief Commissioner's Note on Katha, August 1886. The Rangoon College was developed from the Rangoon High School in 1881 and, in 1882, the Educational Syndicate, a body constituted for the purpose of conducting examinations and for advising the local Government regarding certain standards of instruction in Lower Burma, came into being. The College was from the beginning staffed from the British teachers of the High School, the first Principal being J.H.Gilbert. See The Burma Digest, vol. 1, 15 July 1946, No. 9, pp. 32-34, and Imperial Gazetteer of India (Burma), vol. 1, pp. 133-134.

[19] IUBP, vol. 2720, December 1886 (Establishment), p.28.

[20] The number of pongyis who came forward to co-operate with the British was not, however, large. The D.C. of Sagaing, A.R.Colquhoun, appears to have been the only officer to receive "assistance and information of great value from pongyis", BMP, vol. 2664A, October 1886 (Military), pp. 5-6.

these men belonged to the areas which were covered by military posts. Beyond these posts many more remained unaffected. As new posts were established and British authority extended, more headmen submitted. But large tracts were still left either uncontrolled or unvisited, so that new leaders continued to spring up.

While new leaders were springing up, the old ones were steadily increasing their bands. Thus the work of breaking up rebel bands in the plains, which was the basic objective of the cold season operations, was not an easy one, especially because the old leaders were committed to the cause of resistance. The basic source of strength of these leaders was public support. The people understood them, admired them, and assisted them, covering their movements with a conspiracy of silence.[21] Their names, in the words of Thirkell White, "became household words".[22] The official British view was, however, different. It was persistently held that the people assisted these bos out of fear rather than from a genuine patriotic feeling. The argument which is put forward in support of this view is that the people had no reason to love these bos because their attacks were directed not so much against the British as against their own countrymen. Lord Dufferin wrote:

> "It is a mistake to suppose that the dacoits who are now disturbing the peace of many districts in Upper Burmah ..... are chiefly bands of patriots or partisan warriors opposing the invasion of their country by a foreign Power. Their object for the most part is plunder and their attacks are principally directed, not against our parties or posts ..... but against the

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[21] Fielding Hall, A People at School, p.82.

[22] White, op.cit., p.161.

defenceless villages of their own countrymen..."[23]

This view was undoubtedly inconsistent with the principles of human nature. Resistance to the invaders, however sporadic and feeble it may be, is a common fact of history. Of course, the rebels had often pressed heavily on the people for men and arms and supplies. They also burnt villages and killed people on charges of collaboration, as a result of which many innocent people suffered. But this is the characteristic of every war of resistance. Those excesses might have discredited the leadership for a while, but they certainly did not weaken it. The people continued to support the movement and its leaders, because the basic issue, namely, that of resisting the invaders, was strong and emotional enough to help them ignore many a harsh proceeding of the insurgents. There were, of course, many who were found to be collaborating with the invaders. But in most cases they did so out of fear, for a genuine appreciation of foreign rule at that stage was out of the question.

This explanation of human nature alone is not, however, enough to establish the fact that the Burmese people supported the leaders of resistance out of a genuine patriotic feeling. The matter should also be examined in the light of the nature of leadership itself.[24] To begin with Maung Shwe;[25] this man had become popular long before

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[23] Cmd. 4887, 1886, Further Correspondence relating to Burmah, pp. 24-25, Viceroy's Minute, 17 February 1886, Parliamentary Papers.

[24] In Chapter Three (101-107) reference has already been made to some of the formidable leaders. But that is just an account of their engagements with the British troops. That does not indicate anything about the nature of leadership which each of these men promised.

[25] Maung Shwe was about 50, HTWP, vol. 10, India Office Library, Mss. Eur. E 254, Confidential Reports on persons of influence.

the British Expeditionary Force began to move up the river Irrawaddy. His influence extended far beyond the limit of his own village, Mindat. This wide influence was certainly not due to his being Thugyi of that village, for, according to the traditional pattern of village leadership, a Thugyi's influence was usually limited to his own village. One may argue that his popularity might be the result of his daring exploits as a dacoit leader, since a successful dacoit leader was regarded as a hero in the Burmese society.[26] But this does not seem to be acceptable, because his proceedings were not of traditional nature. His attacks were directed, almost without exception, against British villages across the border.[27] Villages within Upper Burma were not his targets. This kind of discrimination, which could hardly be expected of a dacoit pure and simple, reflects a political motive. It seems that Bo Shwe had taken a clear anti-British stand right from the beginning, making a successful appeal to the national sentiment of the people. The response was quick and spontaneous. The people of this area were mostly Burman[28] to whom the idea of an anti-British stand might have appeared to be logical. The memory of the first two wars was still fresh in their minds. Furthermore, during the last few years of Thibaw's reign, Anglo-Burmese relations

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[26] See above, p.77

[27] Sir Charles Crosthwaite, The Pacification of Burma (London 1912), p.27.

[28] Imperial Gazetteer of India (Burma), Provincial Series, vol. 2, p.40.

were at their lowest ebb. Thus the amount of public support which Bo Shwe had managed to get was solid.

Bo Shwe's influence was also based on the tacit support of the Court at Mandalay. This is proved by the fact that he had been several times recalled to Mandalay at the request of the British Government, but had been allowed as often to return.[29] The King never took any serious action against him, which suggests that he approved Bo Shwe's action. Bo Shwe was to Thibaw what Francis Drake was to Elizabeth. The King's attitude was clear at the time of the outbreak of hostilities. Bo Shwe, who was at Mandalay at this time having been recalled for the last time owing to the strong remonstrances of the Chief Commissioner, was at once sent back to do his utmost against the invaders.[30] This royal commission enhanced Bo Shwe's power and prestige enormously. The people of the whole tract on the west bank of the Irrawaddy became more confident of his leadership.[31] The simmering anti-British feeling, which had so long found an indirect channel to assert itself, now turned into an active opposition. The British were surprised, they did not anticipate any kind of stiff resistance. Indeed, they had taken quite a long time to realise the gravity of the situation, so that their record of operations against Bo Shwe especially during the

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[29]Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.27. See also A. Conservative's "Our Task in Burmah" in The Fortnightly Review, vol. XLI (New Series), 1887, p.379; HTWP, vol. 10, Confidential Reports on persons of influence.

[30]Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.27.

[31]Maung Tha Aung and Maung Mya Din, "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, 1941, vol. XXXI, Part 11, p.90.

first ten months "can be only described as disastrous".[32]

Bo Shwe became more powerful as the cold season drew nearer. His influence seems to have attracted Ôktama pongyi who was operating in the north beyond Minbu. These two leaders now joined hands, and a meeting took place between them with a view to some combined movement.[33] This incident undoubtedly brought about a great change in the balance of power in the south-western tract. Bo Shwe grew more invincible than ever, for Ôktama's support added a new kind of force to his movement. Ôktama presented a different kind of leadership. Bo Shwe appealed to the racial sentiment of the Burmese people, but Ôktama appealed to their religious sentiment so that he could quickly draw, indeed more quickly than any of his counterparts did, a considerable following, especially from the peasantry who were more susceptible to religion than any other section of the community. Ôktama's position as a resistance leader was undoubtedly better than that of Bo Shwe. The people trusted him because they felt that a pongyi would never mislead them.[34] But, fortunately for the British, he could not make full use of this

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[32] GSWP, vol. 3, Mss. Eur. F. 108, India Office Library, White's demi-official to Lt. Gen. Macpherson, 2 September 1886.

[33] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.92. See also Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.27. It is not known when the meeting between Bo Shwe and Ôktama had taken place. The Report of Capt. Parrott, the Deputy Commissioner of Minbu, which informs us of the meeting, does not say anything about its date. The Report was made on 6 September 1886. It seems most likely that the meeting was held immediately before Capt. Parrott prepared his report.

[34] Even Sir Charles Crosthwaite did not have any doubt about Ôktama's sincerity. He wrote that Ôktama "had inspired his followers with some of his spirit, whether fanatical or patriotic..." See The Pacification of Burma, p.27.

massive public support. The course of events during the first ten months show that the exertions of his men had not made a marked impression on the British position. The reason is not, perhaps, far to seek. Ôktama was not as militant as Bo Shwe. This was undoubtedly the effect of his religious background. However, his alliance with Bo Shwe was a great achievement for the latter; it strengthened Bo Shwe's position, providing it with a powerful religious sanction. The peasantry who were already working for him now received a fresh moral impetus; they now fought more zealously than ever.

To the British, therefore, the situation in the south-western region of Upper Burma at the beginning of the cold weather looked extremely bad. Any rash move, like one taken in June when Phayre was killed, might prove disastrous. This is why General White advised caution in embarking on field operations there.[35]

Hla-U was also very powerful. He seems to have been a brigand during Thibaw's time, and harried the country between the rivers Mu and Irrawaddy.[36] But his position as a resistance leader since the beginning of hostilities does not appear to have been weakened by that background. The reason is not perhaps far to seek. When hostilities broke out Hla-U was in prison. Thibaw released him from prison and ordered him to fight the British with the help of his followers whom the King summoned by proclamation.[37] This undoubtedly

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[35] GSWP, vol. 3, Letter to Macpherson, 2 September 1886.

[36] Cmd. 4962, p.195. Hla U was between 30 and 40, HTWP, vol. 10, Confidential Reports, 'H'.

[37] Burma Gazetteer: Shwebo District (Rangoon 1929), vol. A, p.36; HTWP, vol. 10, Confidential Reports, 'H'.

put Hla-u at par with Bo Shwe and other leaders of resistance, and enabled him to get public support and confidence. A brigand turning into a patriot during national crisis is not an uncommon thing in history. He collected a considerable following within a short time. The military papers show that he was able to assemble at least 3,000 men at a time.

But, compared with Bo Shwe, Hla-U had one great practical disadvantage. His jurisdiction was not as compact as that of Bo Shwe. Bo Shwe's jurisdiction was confined within a specific area between the Arakan Yoma on the west and the Irrawaddy to the east. But Hla-U's jurisdiction did not have any such recognised limit; it was very wide, extending to several districts in the north, south, east and west. This naturally made his position dangerously exposed. The effect of this position was seen during the military operations of the first ten months. Hunted down by the British troops, Hla-u moved from place to place, having no safe asylum, like the one Bo Shwe had among the Arakan ranges, where he could rest for a while to regain his strength.

However, in spite of this disadvantage, Hla-U continued to be one of the most formidable opponents of the British. The villagers supported him, and sheltered him. None betrayed him. This is proved by the fact that the British never got information likely to lead to Hla-U's capture, although they employed several locally recruited spies.[38]

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[38] Col. Fitzgerald's Diary, 1886-88, India Office Library, Reel 605, December 1886 to January 1887.

At times Hla-U appeared to be as invincible as Bo Shwe. This is clear from Lieut. Holand's Report of December 1886. His Report tends to suggest that the British troops were not capable of capturing Hla-U.[39] Perhaps he did not exaggerate the situation much. Apart from the support he had received from his countrymen, Hla-U proved himself to be a very dependable leader. He displayed very sound judgement in selecting the sites of his camps. In this respect he perhaps excelled Bo Shwe. He appears always to have had two main resorts from whence he carried out his raids in the Myinmu district - Magyioke in the north and Kyauklat in the south. As regards the latter, his power extended to sixteen neighbouring villages where he had always had willing followers. He never remained in any one spot for more than twelve hours.[40] He never stopped in any place the British had visited. His camps, though formed in places difficult of access, had always an easy outlet for escape; they had without exception an unfailing supply of water. He had, moreover, an excellent system of outposts and a method of dispersing and re-assembling.[41] Thus Hla-U represented exactly the type of leadership which the Burmese resistance needed.

But dependable as he was, he was equally brutal in his proceedings towards those who collaborated with the British. At the beginning of the cold season his emissaries were found demanding men and money from the pro-British villages.[42] The Thugyis who refused supplies

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[39] MLEI, vol. 968, M 4306/1887.

[40] Ibid., p.2.

[41] Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[42] Ibid., vol. 967, M 1161/1887, p.3.

and support, and especially those who had submitted to the British, were murdered.[43] Sometimes the whole village was destroyed on charges of collaboration. Hla-U, it seems, established some sort of terrorism.[44]

Nga Yaing of Sheinmaga was also a brigand like Hla-U during Thibaw's reign. Nga Yaing first came to notice when he attacked a Burmese force sent out by Colonel Sladen in January 1886 and took from them thirty or forty muskets. But unlike Hla-U, he was very popular with the common people of his area, especially with the younger people. They liked him, because his brutalities were confined to either strangers or personal enemies, and he was open-handed and generous.[45] His exaction of money and supplies fell most heavily on the wealthier men.[46] No wonder such a man of character quickly turned into a popular resistance leader, although he was not commissioned by the King to fight the English. The younger people, attracted by his romantic Robin Hood type proceedings, crowded to him, and accepted him as an ideal natural leader of resistance.[47]

Popular as he was, Nga Yaing's leadership was also dependable. His tactics were based on a practical consideration of the situation.

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[43] Scott, Burma, p.339.

[44] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.81. Hla U's brutality may partly be explained by his early career as a brigand.

[45] H.Fielding Hall, The Soul of a People (London1898), p.61.

[46] Ibid., p.62.

[47] Ibid., p.61.

The resistance of the first ten months convinced him that he and his men were absolutely no match for British troops. So he changed his tactics. He decided to offer some kind of passive resistance to the British.[48] No Burman was to accept service under the British, to give them information or supplies, to be their guide, or to assist them in any way. He even executed a headman near Sheinmaga because he had acted as guide to a body of troops. He cut off all supplies from the interior, picketting the roads, and stopped all men from entering Sheinmaga.[49] Sheinmaga, perhaps because of the presence of Gurkha troops, did not comply and on one night in October, in execution of his threat, Nga Yaing burnt the village to the ground under the very noses of the Gurkhas.[50]

Buddha Yaza Min Laung of Yamethin presented an altogether different kind of leadership. Bo Shwe, Ôktama, Hla-U, and Nga Yaing appealed to the national sentiment of the Burmese people with direct reference to the Kala invasion. But Buddha Yaza, as the title itself shows, sought to win popular support with direct reference

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[48] H.Fielding Hall, The Soul of a People, p.62. When opportunity came he harassed the British troops by attacking the isolated military posts and ambushing the convoys.

[49] Ibid., p.63.

[50] Burma Gazetteer: Shwebo District, vol. A, pp. 38-39. The burning of Sheinmaga in October under the very noses of the Gurkhas contradicts the official view that after his defeat at Hladaw in May Nga Yaing had scarcely any vestiges of authority left, IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.54. The death of Tha Pwe, his boldest lieutenant, in August, and the establishment of a military post at Sheinmaga might have affected his position, ibid., p.64. But he was still a force to be reckoned with. Fielding Hall, who accompanied a column which was sent out against Nga Yaing in October, felt the impact of his influence around Sheinmaga, A People at School, pp. 70-77. Col. Fitzgerald had a similar experience, Fitzgerald's Diary, Reel 605, November 1886.

to the traditional belief of the people regarding the emergence of an ideal King to free them from all evils.[51] In the former cases the strength of the resistance depended on the personal image of the leader concerned, while in the latter case it depended on the depth of popular belief. Thus Buddha Yaza had a unique position, because the belief of the people, especially in the rural areas, was really strong. The villagers believed that Buddha Yaza was trying to save the country from the evil impact of the Kala rule. There was, however, an inherent danger in this kind of manoeuvre. As anybody could use the title, there might be more than one Buddha Yaza at a time. The effect was likely to be disastrous, because tradition admits of only one Buddha Yaza at a time.

However, until the end of 1886 Buddha Yaza of Pyinmana-Yamethin appears to have been the only Buddha Yaza in the field. The successive military operations failed to produce any impression upon him and his men. The position is recorded in the Gazetteer of the Yamethin District:

> "Through the rains in spite of frequent military movements and the establishment of numerous posts on the chief lines of communication these gangs remained unbroken enough to undertake the offensive. Buddha Yaza obtained almost complete control of the Taungnyo valley."[52]

The official account of the operations attributes the failure of British arms to break up Buddha Yaza's bands to two things:

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[51] Buddha Yaza meaning Buddha King refers to the ideal monarch who, according to tradition, would emerge to free the people from all evils. This has already been discussed in Chapter Two (pp.64-65) with reference to the Kyanzittha Legend.

[52] Burma Gazetteer: Yamethin District (Rangoon 1934), vol. A, p.37.

first, the density of the jungle in the Pyinmana district and, secondly, the want of mounted men to operate in the open country around Yamethin.[53] Of course, these disadvantages were there. As to the first, forests occupied the whole of the eastern portion of the Yamethin district from the edge of the plains to the borders of the Shan States and also the western and south-western portion of the Pyinmana subdivision from the edge of the plain to the boundaries of the Yamethin district.[54] As to the second, the want of mounted infantry had always been a major disadvantage. But apart from these disadvantages, the failure of the British to break up Buddha Yaza's bands should also be explained by the nature of the resistance itself. The explanation of the concept of a Buddha King given above suggests that the resistance offered to the British by Buddha Yaza was very strong. As the cold season drew nearer, Buddha Yaza emerged more powerful. An indication of this is found in General White's demi-official to General Macpherson, dated 2 September, in which the former described Buddha Yaza as the "principal opponent" in the Pyinmana region.[55]

The growing increase in the power and influence of Buddha Yaza at the beginning of the cold season may be explained in the light of two particular things. First, the numerous British requisitions

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[53] GSWP, vol. 3, demi-official to General Macpherson, 2 September 1886; Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India, compiled by Intelligence Branch Division of the Chief of Staff, Simla, 1907, vol. V, p.253.

[54] Burma Gazetteer: Yamethin District, vol. A, p.3.

[55] GSWP, vol. 3, demi-official to General Macpherson, 2 September 1886.

for transport and forced labour, necessary for the ensuing cold season operations, caused hundreds of discontented villagers to join his bands.[56] Secondly, by the end of October, Buddha Yaza was joined by the Kyimyindaing Prince.[57] Both these leaders were reported to be posted about 18 miles to the north-west of Pyinmana.[58] Their main target was Pyinmana itself.[59] Thus the situation in the south-eastern tract of the country looked decidedly ominous for the British. One may, however, doubt as to the real weight of the Kyimyindaing Prince as an ally, because the origin of this prince was doubtful from the beginning. The genuine Kyimyindaing Prince,[60] it is said, died in the reign of King Mindon.[61] This man was alleged to be a doctor, his real name being Maung Gale.[62] Scott, however, wrote that he was just an ordinary man and that he was once flogged in Thibaw's times for misdemeanours.[63] From another source he appears to have been a cultivator by birth but an actor by profession.[64] Thus he was far from being connected with royal blood. One may, therefore, think, perhaps reasonably, that Buddha

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[56] The Times, 8 October 1886, p.5.

[57] The Pioneer Mail, 3 November 1886, p.558; 10 November 1886, p.587.

[58] The Times, 6 November 1886, p.7.

[59] MLEI, vol. 964, M 11825/1886, p.2.

[60] The Kyimyindaing Prince was a son of King Mindon.

[61] Cmd. 4962, 1887, p.195.

[62] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.56.

[63] Scott, Burma, p.337.

[64] "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, p.122.

Yaza's association with an impostor was likely to discredit his movement instead of strengthening it, especially because the movement was connected with the sacred Buddha King Legend. But that did' not happen, because that man, whether a genuine prince or not, had already gained a certain amount of public confidence having decidedly proved himself a determined opponent of the British. He first established himself at Taungdwingyi with several hundreds of followers, and fought the British troops there.[65] Subsequently, he moved to Yamethin, where he was welcomed by Lewun Maung San Dun,[66] and led the combined forces against the British column proceeding from Toungoo .[67] All these must have cleared some of the confusion which arose regarding his identity.

The account given above of some of the formidable Burmese leaders of resistance with reference to the character of their leadership reveals at least two things of practical importance. First, it strongly suggests that the people supported those leaders spontaneously from a genuine patriotic feeling. Secondly, it nullifies to a certain extent the idea that the leaders of resistance had no unity at all. Of course, the resistance as a whole lacked co-ordination on a national basis. This was almost inevitable in those days in Upper Burma. According to the traditional pattern of leadership in the community, the leadership was usually confined within the limit of

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[65] "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, pp.90, 122.

[66] Ibid., p.90.

[67] Ibid., p.122.

a particular locality.[68] Outside that locality the leader was unknown, could command no following, and had no authority.[69] It is, therefore, a mistake to think that the Burmese people should have outgrown such deep-rooted particularist characteristics overnight; it required time and experience. But nevertheless, some leaders of outstanding ability such as Bo Shwe, Ôktama and Buddha Yaza, who could think far in advance of their time, broke out of the bonds of tradition and placed national interests above any other consideration. Their alliance, although regional in character, was perhaps a challenge to the traditional concept of leadership. They were the pioneers of the future national movement. The British were to take these facts into consideration before they embarked upon operations against those leaders in the ensuing cold season.[70]

There were some other objectives of the cold season operations, closely connected with the basic one discussed above. To make the operations against the formidable leaders of resistance completely successful, simultaneous occupation of certain special tracts was essential. These tracts were Pakangyi opposite Myingyan, the Yaw country west of Pagan, and the Chindwin Valley north of Alon, except in close proximity to the river. A considerable part of these tracts was still unvisited by the British troops. If these places

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[68] H.Fielding Hall, A People at School, p.82.

[69] Ibid., pp. 82-83.

[70] The account given above goes a long way to show how difficult was the basic objective of the cold season operations.

were not occupied and firmly held, the powerful leaders of the plains, when hard pressed by the British troops, were likely to move to them and form new pockets of resistance. Apart from this, these areas themselves were very unsettled. As to Pakangyi, the standard of rebellion had already been raised in May by the Shwegyobyu Prince, one of Mindon's nephews.[71] He was in the Thayetmyo district at the time of the occupation of Mandalay.[72] He was undoubtedly a man of considerable character and ambition. He went up to the Chindwin country and quickly established himself at Kanle as a determined opponent of the British. The expedition under Major Stead in May 1886 produced little or no effect on his movement, so that by June, with the help of the ex-Wun of Myingyan and some Thugyis, he was able to collect some 8,000 men.[73] The British had virtually no control over this tract. Police Inspector Maung Po Ka, who seems to have been posted at Pakangyi following Major Stead's expedition, was practically helpless, because no help could be sent to him during the rainy season.[74]

As to the Yaw country, the principal rebel leader in this tract was the Pauk Thugyi. He was no less powerful, because his

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[71] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.94.

[72] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.84. See also Scott, Burma, p.337, and Burma Gazetteer: Pakokku District (Rangoon 1913), vol. A, p.19. The Shwegyobyu Prince's father, the Hlaing Prince, was accused by King Mindon of treason and was executed. The Prince was then taken to British Burma.

[73] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7957/1886, p.5. See also HTWP, vol. 10, Confidential Reports.

[74] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.37, Notes on Myingyan.

source of strength, apart from the fact of his being a Thugyi, was a letter of appointment from the Myinzaing Prince making him Wun of Yaw. He prepared troops and guns to oppose the British.[75] No attempt had yet been made to break up his bands.

As to the Chindwin Valley, except for a few slices of territory around the military posts at Alon, Mingin, Kalewa, and Kindat, the whole tract was in the hands of the rebels. This is clear from the September Report of F.D.Raikes, the Deputy Commissioner of the Chindwin. Raikes wrote:

> "The influence of the military posts at Alon, Mingin, and Kindat is only felt within a very small distance from each post. This is shown by the way in which rebels and dacoits frequently assemble and remain within a few miles of a large military post with impunity until a party is despatched against them, when they almost invariably receive information in good time, and generally manage to escape before the troops get within striking distance."[76]

The occupation of the State of Wuntho was another important objective of the cold season operations. This state, lying between the Katha district and the Upper Chindwin, was the largest state in Upper Burmer proper.[77] Its ruler, Maung Aung Myat, aged 25 years, was the most powerful man in that area.[78] He called himself a Sawbwa, although he never had the status of the Shan Chiefs.

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[75] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.40, Notes on Pagan.

[76] Ibid., p.88.

[77] The total area of Wuntho was 3,730 square miles, and the total number of villages in it was 1,240, Imperial Gazetteer of India, vol. 2, Provincial Series, p.139.

[78] Maung Shwe Tha, Aung Myat's father, was a Myothugyi during Mindon's time. Mindon raised him to the position of Sawbwa for his loyalty, HTWP, vol. 10, Confidential Reports.

Most of the lesser Chiefs of the area were under his influence. These Chiefs, it seems, were always ready to supply him men and arms on demand.[79]

Confident of his position, the Sawbwa was not willing to submit to British rule. When the news of Thibaw's fall reached him he promptly placed a number of his fighting men on the borders of his State to check the British entry into his jurisdiction.[80] It is not unlikely that Thibaw's removal led a powerful ruler like him to think of building up a kingdom of his own, especially when time and circumstances were on his side. The British were busy in settling affairs at Mandalay and along the main line of communication. Even if their hands were free, a quick advance upon Wuntho, marching through some 150 miles of unknown, hostile and difficult country, was out of the question. Above all, a strong public resistance based on a common anti-British feeling could be easily built up, as the population of Wuntho was mostly Burman.[81] These considerations must have influenced the attitude of the Sawbwa.

The attitude of the Sawbwa was without doubt a challenge to British authority. It put the British authorities at Mandalay in an embarrassing position. The situation called for military action, but the policy was to conciliate the Sawbwa and to treat him as a friend, leaving him undisturbed in the possession of all rights and

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[79] MLEI, vol. 965, M 131/1887, p.1.

[80] "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, p.88.

[81] Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series, vol. 1, p.148.

privileges, and to interfere in no way with the internal administration.[82] In fact, this policy was meant for all the semi-independent Chiefs of Upper Burma. It was the fixed policy of Lord Dufferin to preserve so far as might be these autonomous States.[83] This was undoubtedly a sound policy. It was practically impossible to rule these States lying scattered over such a vast country directly from Mandalay, for this would mean the employment of huge man-power and resources on both the civil and military fronts. The only possible way of handling these States smoothly was to leave them undisturbed on condition that the Chiefs would acknowledge British supremacy, keep peace among themselves, and pay a moderate tribute to the British Government. When this was the case, military action against a recalcitrant Chief, before every possible effort towards conciliation had been made, was certainly not advisable, as that would make all other Chiefs suspicious of British intentions.

So, since January 1886, the British had been persistently trying to persuade the Sawbwa to come in and submit to the British authorities at Katha.[84] Although the Sawbwa informed the British in January that he had no intention of opposing British rule,[85] his attitude throughout 1886 did not appear to be friendly. He collected some 5,000 men, and his lieutenants Tun Aung and Bamauk Thaing with 540 men entrenched themselves in a village to the north

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[82] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.9.

[83] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.92.

[84] MLEI vol. 961, M 7753/1886, pp. 90-91.

[85] Ibid., p.91.

of Wuntho.[86] The Sawbwa, however, informed the British that he made these preparations to defend his district from dacoity.[87] But his other actions appear to have been inconsistent with this. He strengthened the fortifications of Wuntho, prepared an asylum for himself at a remote northern village, and made advances to the Chinese Viceroy of Yunnan.[88] He also harassed the outlying part of his country administered by the pro-British Shwe Ashe Chaung Wun.[89] These proceedings, however, did not include anything constituting an overt anti-British act. The Chief Commissioner himself admitted this in his Note on the Katha district.[90] But, nevertheless, they were a matter of great anxiety to the British especially since the Sawbwa's unwillingness to submit to British rule was becoming widely known.

In one way at least the Sawbwa's proceedings affected the overall British position directly. As he was the most influential Chief on the right bank of the Irrawaddy, his attitude and actions set an example to other Chiefs and leaders, and contributed to keeping parts of Katha, Bhamo, Mogaung, and Shwebo in a ferment. The District Officer of Myadaung reported early in September: "The outlook at present is not at all promising. Wuntho is threatening our western border, and all the minor rebel and dacoit bands are therefore on the move."[91] This Officer went so far as to suggest

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[86] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, p.90.

[87] Ibid., p.91.

[88] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.13.

[89] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.9. The Wun of Shwe Ashe Chaung was the most loyal supporter of the British in that area. The British gave him all sorts of help to secure his position. See Cmd. 4887, p.67.

[90] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.13, Note on Katha, 19 August 1886.

[91] Ibid., p.68.

that the Wuntho Sawbwa should be captured as early as possible.

Although military action against Wuntho appeared to be inevitable, British policy displayed an exceptionally high degree of restraint. The Chief Commissioner had already administered a note of caution: "It is altogether undesirable that we should be compelled to attack any Shan Sawbwa, carry war into his country, and subvert his power."[92] Thus it was clear that any military action against the Wuntho Sawbwa during the ensuing cold season would go hand in hand with conciliatory efforts.

The occupation of the Ruby Mines district, lying immediately to the north of the Mandalay district, was another important objective of the cold season operations. Only the outskirts of the district had so far been visited by the British. The importance of the district lay in the fact that it was known to possess the most valuable ruby mines in the world. These mines were mostly concentrated at the three townships of Mogok, Kyatpyin and Kathe, the most productive ones being at Mogok.[93] The area as a whole was known as the Yetana Twet Mye or Stone Tract.[94] From the earliest times of European knowledge of and intercourse with that country the name of Burma seems to have been connected with rubies in the minds of the hearers. Ludovico de Varthema, an Italian merchant, visited Pegu at the close of the fifteenth century and spoke of

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[92] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.13, Notes on Katha, 19 August 1886.

[93] H.L.Chhibber, The Mineral Resources of Burma (London 1934), p.8.

[94] Burma Gazetteer: Ruby Mines District (Rangoon 1915), vol. A, p.25.

rubies in his account. Varthema wrote: "The sole merchandise of these people is jewels, that is, rubies, which come from another city called Capellan, which is distant from this a thirty days' journey."[95] Ralph Fitch, the first recorded Englishman to visit Burma in the late eighties of the sixteenth century, wrote: "Caplan is the place where they finde the rubies, saphires and spinelles."[96] Father Sangermano, an Italian missionary who had been in Burma between 1783 and 1808, mentioned rubies in his account as an important source of revenue to the Burmese Emperor.[97] Thus it seems most likely that the British after occupying Upper Burma felt a strong natural temptation to get hold of the ruby mines as early as possible.

The economic importance of the mines was really great. They paid a handsome revenue to the royal exchequer. They were let out on lease for a fixed annual sum, and in addition to this payment there was a law that all stones above a certain stated size belonged to the King, who also reserved the right to confiscate any mine which, for some reason or another, showed good promise, and work it himself.[98] Apart from these, they also brought money to the royal exchequer in numerous other forms, such as periodical gifts, sale

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[95] Poggio Bracciolini and Ludovico de Varthema, Travellers in Disguise: Narratives of Eastern Travel, Eng. translation by J.W.Jones (1963), p.179.

[96] William Foster (ed.), Early Travels in India, 1583-1619 (Ox. Univ. Press, 1921), p.39. Both Varthema and Ralph Fitch have mentioned 'Capellan' or 'Caplan'. This name has been identified with Kyatpyin'.

[97] Sangermano, A Description of the Burmese Empire (Rome 1833), p.73.

[98] N.M.Penzer, The Mineral Resources of Burma (London 1922), p.25.

tax, purchase tax, customs duties, and ruby mart duties.[99] These explain why the hold of the Kings over the mines was traditionally very firm. The Kings appear to have kept the tract entirely to themselves and no lesser personages were ever given claims over it.[100]

The royal hold over the mines grew stronger during King Bodawpaya's times. The royal interests had been looked after by three So-thugyis in charge of Mogok, Kyatpyin, and Kathe.[101] Bodawpaya was not happy with the So-thugyi system because these headmen were reported to be making a much better thing out of the mines than the King thought fair. The King, however, did not abolish the system. He appointed a number of gaungs as a sort of check on the So-thugyis.[102]

It is not known exactly how much money the earlier Burmese Kings obtained from the mines. King Mindon obtained about Rs. 90,000 to Rs. 100,000 yearly by direct management. King Thibaw seems to have obtained a little more than his father had done. The highest revenue realised in one year by him was Rs. 150,000.[103] The tract was last leased by his Government to certain headmen for one year ending in July 1886 at a payment nominally of Rs. 250,000, all rubies

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[99] Burma Gazetteer: Ruby Mines District, vol. A, pp. 30, 34, 73.

[100] Ibid., p.30.

[101] It should be noted that originally the Stone Tract belonged to the Shan State of Mong Mit. In 1597 the King of Burma annexed it in exchange for Tagaungmyo. The system of So-thugyi grew after this, ibid., pp. 27-28.

[102] Ibid., p.31. See also Joseph Kessel, Mogok - The Valley of Rubies, translated from the French by Stella Rodway (London 1960), p.62.

[103] Cmd. 5140, 1887, Ruby Mines Correspondence, pp. 1, 4, Parliamentary Papers.

worth Rs. 2,000 and upwards being reserved for the King.[104]

The attention of Lord Dufferin was directed to the ruby mines during his visit to Mandalay in February 1886.[105] But an occupation of the district was not possible at that stage because the British were pre-occupied with the work of pacifying the plains of Upper Burma proper. Later the rainy season put any expedition to the mines out of the question. One may argue that the situation in the plains was still unfavourable for an expedition to the mines at the end of 1886. But the situation in the mines district itself demanded immediate military action. There was no discipline in the Stone Tract. The withdrawal of royal protection following Thibaw's fall left the former So-thugyis and gaungs virtually powerless. The entire tract, except for the areas where they lived, slipped out of their control. Mining was free, and the stones obtained were disposed of without any restriction whatsoever.[106] G.D.Burgess, the Commissioner of the Northern Division, who accompanied the Chief Commissioner to Thabeikkyin in August 1886 collected the following information:

> "The ground is free to all and miners come to it from all parts of the country, Burmans, and Shans, and Chinamen. No one can interfere with an existing pit or claim, but otherwise he can dig where he likes

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[104] Cmd. 5140, 1887, Ruby Mines Correspondence, p. 4, Parliamentary Papers. A copy of the lease has been found. It appears to be the most important single document showing the exact royal position regarding the mines. It proves that the King asserted an exclusive right to grant permission to mine for rubies, to regulate their purchase and export, and to levy duties on their sale and transit, ibid., p.4.

[105] Ibid., p.3.

[106] Burma Gazetteer: Ruby Mines District, vol. A, p.73.

without saying 'by your leave' to anyone."[107]

One remarkable thing in this state of affairs was that almost all the stones mined during the period following Thibaw's fall were smuggled out of the country. There is no reason to believe that these were brought down to the plains, because the situation there was extremely bad. Moreover, smuggling of rubies, in spite of the utmost vigilance of the Burmese authorities, was common. According to M. Andreino, who had looked after the mines for nine years in Mindon's time, some £80,000 worth of rubies were smuggled out to Europe yearly.[108] To the native people the situation might be the most ideal one, but to the British, as being the heirs of the Burmese monarchy, it must have certainly been unbearable.

There was also a very strong political consideration. The inhabitants of the Stone Tract were predominantly Shans.[109] It did not seem unlikely that the rapidly growing Shan Movement in the southern part of the plateau[110] might at any time find willing supporters in the Mogok valley. In fact, the possibility of such a development was very strong, because the Shans of the Stone Tract

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[107] It seems that at least some parts of the Stone Tract were still held by the former So-thugyis. This is proved by the information which Burgess collected from another village called Kyanhnyat. Burgess was informed that the ruby mines were worked entirely under the orders of the So-thugyi, BRAP, vol. 2664A, August 1886 (Revenue & Agriculture), p.47. This information cannot certainly betaken as referring to the entire Stone Tract.

[108] BRAP, vol. 2664A, January 1886 (Rev. & Ag.), p.1. Note by Bernard, 31 December 1885.

[109] The original inhabitants of the Stone Tract were "Byaws" from Tagaung. They were followed by Shans and Palaungs. After the annexation of the tract from Mong Mit in 1597 the King sent up a certain number of Burmese settlers. During Bodawpaya's time there was a revolution and disturbance resulting in famine and frequent inroads from neighbouring territories; and for three years the tract was deserted. The people fled to Theinni and Mongmaw on the Chinese border. Most of the refugees had intermarried with Shans with the consequence that their descendants had practically become Shans, Burma Gazetteer: Ruby Mines District, vol. A, p.40.

[110] See below, pp. 180-184.

as a whole might think, perhaps reasonably, that a successful resistance to the Kalas would ensure their newly acquired mining privileges. There were already signs of unrest in November. Some 700 Shans were reported to be assembled with the object of offering resistance to any British expedition to the mines.[111] They also issued a proclamation urging the tribes, presumably the Palaungs, to resist every British attempt to occupy the mines.[112] Such a situation naturally demanded immediate military action.

The British, however, made an attempt to settle the ruby mines question by negotiation with the former lessees, pending the despatch of an expedition. The lessees were invited to meet the British Commissioner of the division. They were told that every consideration would be accorded to the privileges that had been conceded to them under Thibaw; but that they must submit to British rules and regulations, the property in the mines being a royal monopoly.[113] But they refused to come in. Their attitude seems to have been hardened because of the virtual inaccessibility of their position.[114] Thus the British were left with no alternative but to despatch an expedition to the Ruby Mines District.

Finally, an expedition would also be despatched to the Shan States proper, because the situation there appeared to be a matter of great anxiety for the British. These States, lying to the east

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[111] The Times (London), 22 November 1886, p.6.

[112] The Times, 24 November 1886, p.5.

[113] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions, vol. V, p.270.

[114] Ibid., p.271.

of Upper Burma proper, on both sides of the Salween river, stretching to the confines of China, Tongking and Siam,[115] were inhabited by groups of Tai peoples. These were traditionally ruled by hereditary Chiefs who called themselves Sawbwas. Although tributary to the Burmese Government, the Shan Sawbwas traditionally enjoyed a high degree of independence. As R.H.Pilcher observed, they had the power of life and death over their subjects and were virtually absolute in their authority.[116] There were, of course, certain checks on their authority. Their sons were taken to the Burmese Court at an early age as hostages for their good behaviour.[117] They were always under the supervision of Burmese officials. There was a Burmese Resident at Mone, who was supported by a large Burmese military force.[118] The Reisdent's duties were in his absence conducted by a political agent. There were also political agents in some of the other principal States. These checks sometimes proved extremely vexatious when there was a 'bad' King on the Burmese throne.[119]

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[115] The official figure as to the area of the Shan States was 40,000 square miles, Notes and Statistics (Rangoon 1891), Part 1, p.15. But according to Crosthwaite, it was 60,000 square miles, The Pacification of Burma, p.30.

[116] BFP, vol. 2664A, December 1886 (Foreign Dept.), p.48, Note by R.H.Pilcher on "The Shan States tributary to Burma", 3 December 1885. Pilcher was a junior secretary to the Chief Commissioner. He was sent to the Shan States as a Political Officer to collect information on matters of politics and history. He was very popular with the Shans. He knew their language well.

[117] Ibid., p.47.

[118] Ibid., p.48.

[119] W.W.Cochrane, The Shans (Rangoon 1915), vol. 1, p.80.

Against the distant trans-Salween States, however, these checks were much less effective; here the people not only enjoyed more independence, their feeling against the Burmese Government was "one of dislike".[120]

The British attitude towards the Shan States was from the beginning one of conciliation and friendship. Sir Charles Bernard wired the Viceroy on 20 November 1885, when the Expeditionary Force was still on its way to Mandalay:

> "I asked General Prendergast not to send his notice among Shan States and told him we had no idea of governing them or converting them into British districts even in event of annexation. I gave him a first-rate Shan interpreter who has travelled in Shan States, and suggested that, if he had opportunity of communicating with Shan Chiefs, he should tell them that British would not interfere in internal autonomy of the larger States so long as they governed well, promoted trade, and paid a moderate tribute."[121]

Bernard's views formed the basis of future British policy regarding the Shan States. This policy was also applicable to the semi-independent Chiefs of Upper Burma proper. The practical considerations on which this policy was based were almost the same as those already mentioned in connection with the Wuntho Sawbwa. Speaking from a purely military point of view, it was certainly not a wise policy to fight the Burmans and the Shans simultaneously. So, from the beginning, the British were careful not to do anything which might offend the Shan rulers and throw them into opposition. Again, the vast Shan plateau, in addition to Upper Burma proper, could

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[120] BFP vol. 2664A, December 1886 (Foreign Dept.), p.49, Pilcher's Note.

[121] Ibid., p.39.

certainly not be administered from Mandalay directly. The distant trans-Salween States at least would always remain a centre of disaffection. This might be the reason why Sir Ashley Eden and Colonel Henry Yule wrote early in January 1886:

> "we regard it as highly inexpedient that we should undertake any responsibilities in connection with these States [trans-Salween States]; and it might be arranged that whatever actual rights we possess, as the heirs of the Burmese monarchy, over those States, might be made over to China."[122]

This was not, however, done. The reasons are not far to seek. First, Britain and China entered into negotiations in January 1886 over the latter's claim to sovereignty over Burma.[123] If Britain transferred the trans-Salween States to China this might strengthen the latter's stand regarding Burma as a whole. Secondly, this kind of deal with China was likely to aggrieve Siam which was a friendly Power. Thirdly, as China's hold over these distant places was likely to be very uncertain, this might pave the way for French interference.[124]

Britain's Shan policy was at first a success. The Shan States did not give any trouble, at least during the first few months of the occupation of Mandalay. But soon things there began to move in such a way that the British position in Upper Burma proper appeared to be endangered. The origin of this trouble is to be traced to the proceedings of the trans-Salween State of Kengtung in 1884. The Sawbwa of Kengtung had taken offence at the appointment by King

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[122] Political and Secret Memoranda, B 37, "The Shan States and their relation with Burma", 5 January 1886, p.2. Sir Ashley Eden was in the Council of India from 1882 to 1887.

[123] See above, pp.119-121.

[124] DP, Reel 516, Kimberley to Dufferin, 29 January 1885, no. 15.

Mindon of a Sawbwa to the Keng Hung State without reference to him. He massacred the Burmese Political Agent and his guard on Thibaw's conferring this appointment in 1884, and installed his own candidate in the Sawbwaship.[125] King Thibaw was too weak to retaliate, and the powerful Chief of Mong Noi joined in the revolt, followed by the Sawbwas of Mong Nawng and Lawk Sawk. These more accessible States, however, on joining the general rebellion, were overrun by the Burmese troops, and the three Sawbwas had to take refuge in Kengtung.[126] Thus Kengtung became the centre of an anti-Burmese movement. The rebel Sawbwas now invited the Limbin Prince, a nephew of King Mindon, who was at Moulmein at that time, to head a Shan combination.[127] The Prince arrived in Kengtung in December 1885 and took the leadership of what came to be known as the Limbin Confederacy.

The Limbin Confederacy, as appears from the circumstances of its origin, was not an anti-British organisation. Its immediate object was to re-establish the deposed Chiefs in their States. This was quickly achieved. By March 1886 the Sawbwas of Mong Noi and Lawk Sawk and the Myo-sa of Mong Nawng re-entered their principalities triumphantly.[128] But the basic object of the Confederacy, as explained by the rebel Sawbwas in their letters to the Pro-British Sawbwa of Thibaw, was to have "a suzerain" who could maintain the peace among the Shan States, protect the religion, and safeguard the general

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[125] Political and Secret Memoranda, B 37, p.1. See also BFP, vol. 2664A, December 1886 (Foreign Dept.), p.54, Pilcher's Note.

[126] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions, p.408.

[127] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, Part I, vol. 1, p.291.

[128] BFP vol. 2664A, October 1886 (Foreign Dept.), p.16.

interests of the Shans, presumably against Burmese exploitation.[129]

Lady Scott observed another object. She wrote:

> "Kengtung took up the cause of the Prince, not, it would seem, from any opposition to the British Government, of which he probably knew nothing at all, but from a firm conviction that unless there was some central authority the Shan States would fall a prey to the Chinese or Siamese."[130]

But R.H.Pilcher observed that the Kengtung Sawbwa, presumably out of fear of Burmese retribution, sought the protection of the Siamese Government.[131] This seems to contradict Lady Scott's observation in part. However, the idea of establishing a connection with Siam did not materialise because the invasion of Kengtung by Siam at the time of the Second Anglo-Burmese War (1852) was still fresh in the memory of the people.[132] The Kengtung Chief quickly gave up the idea as soon as he realised that Burmese threats were not real.[133]

Limbin himself professed friendship to the British.[134] To the British, therefore, the situation did not look bad. A Shan confederacy under a friendly protected prince would not only give them a free hand to cope with the situation in Upper Burma itself, it would also provide a check against any serious anti-British movement in the Shan country. Furthermore, the Prince appears to be a weak personality, which was no doubt an advantage for the

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[129] BFP, vol. 2664A, October 1886 (Foreign Dept.). Letters from the Kengtung, Mong Pawn, Lawk Sawk and Mong Noi Sawbwas to the Sawbwa of Thibaw, 26 March, 1886.

[130] G.E.Mitton (Lady Scott), Scott of the Shan Hills (London 1936), p.74.

[131] BFP, vol. 2664A, December 1886 (Foreign Dept.), p.54, Pilcher's Note. See also Political and Secret Memoranda, B 37, p.1.

[132] Ibid., p.49; Crosthwaite, op.cit., pp. 136, 214. Siam taking opportunity of the Second Anglo-Burmese War attacked Kengtung and got so far as to invest the capital of that State. But the Siamese were defeated and their chief generals were captured, Scott, Burma, p.286.

[133] Ibid., p.54.

[134] MLEI, vol. 966, M 12083/1887, p.1.

British.[135]

The confederates grew stronger day by day. They not only re-established the deposed Chiefs, they also punished those who were thought to have collaborated with the Burmese authority by attacking, burning, and ravaging their villages.[136] The Yawnghwe Sawbwa, who was threatened by the confederates,[137] tendered allegiance to the British in May and asked for help. The Sawbwa informed the British that the Limbin Prince intended to fight them and that he was demanding men and arms from other Sawbwas.[138] But the British were not willing to take any action against Limbin and carry war into the Shan plateau, because the latter had as yet committed no overt act of hostility against them. They stuck to their original stand. The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner wrote to the Yawnghwe Sawbwa on 10 May 1886:

> "It is the intention of the Chief Commissioner to send up a British Officer to confer with the Shan Sawbwas and to assure them of the desire of the British Government that the hereditary rights of the Sawbwas shall be respected and maintained. But this will not be done till the rains are at an end. In the meantime each Sawbwa should keep order in his territories, and should decline to harbour dacoits and rebel Princes. When the British Officer comes, he will be accompanied by a sufficient force, and he will protect and support those Sawbwas who have lived at peace."[139]

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[135] Scott wrote that Limbin "was a very unwarlike person", Burma, p.344. Crosthwaite wrote, he was "a poor creature unable to lead anyone", The Pacification of Burma, p.145. The British had an opportunity to know about the Prince who worked under them in Lower Burma for some time.

[136] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, vol. 1, Part I, pp. 293-294.

[137] The Yawnghwe Sawbwa was considered by the confederates to be a collaborator, because after the flight of the Lawk Sawk Sawbwa he had been put by the Burmese in charge of Lawk Sawk, ibid., p.293. See also Frontier and Overseas Expeditions, vol. V, p.408.

[138] BFP, vol. 2664A, May 1886 (Foreign Dept.), pp. 19-20, Letter from Yawnghwe Sawbwa, May 1886.

[139] Ibid., p.20.

But these assurances did not satisfy the Yawnghwe Sawbwa and others, who had expected prompt British assistance. So they continued to ask the British for help.[140]

The death in August of the Myinzaing Prince, who had so long exercised a good deal of authority over some of the northern cis-Salween States from his base at the Natteik Pass, left the Limbin Prince almost the undisputed leader in the Shan country. By September Limbin and his allies had gathered considerable strength. They attacked Yawnghwe, and were on the outskirts of that place. The Sawbwa sent urgent messengers begging a British force might come up at once to help him.[141] Although the Chief Commissioner in his Note of 6 September repeated his original views as to what should be the British policy regarding the Shan States,[142] some military action against the confederates became inevitable.

Limbin's ambitious move was not the only cause which precipitated the assertion of British authority in the Shan States. There was another source of anxiety for the British with regard to these States, namely, the possibility of the Myingun Prince's arrival in the Shan States from Pondicherry to organise a rebellion there.[143] In February 1886 the Prince had already made a journey to Saigon.[144] Presumably, his intention was to explore the possibility of making

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[140] BFP, vol. 2664A, May 1886 (Foreign Dept.), p.56, Bernard's Note, 6 September 1886.

[141] Ibid., p.30.

[142] Ibid., p.88.

[143] See above, p.70.

[144] HC, vol. 85, p.35.

his way to the Shan plateau. He left Pondicherry with the permission of the French authorities, which suggests that the French were backing his plan from the beginning.[145] However, his Shan trip did not materialise. There are two possible explanations. First, the Shan plateau, except for the northern cis-Salween States, was under the Limbin Prince and his allies. In particular, the trans-Salween tract bordering Siam and Laos was the stronghold of the Limbin Confederacy. So it was very difficult for the Myingun Prince to get into the Shan plateau across those borders. Secondly, the attitude of the Siamese Government was certainly not favourable to the Myingun Prince. The former promised to the British that it would arrest the Prince, should he pass through Siamese territory.[146] Whatever may have been the explanation, the Prince was undoubtedly a constant source of anxiety to the British. The death of the Myinzaing Prince seems to have increased the possibility of Myingun's making a serious attempt to enter the Shan plateau.

The various objectives of the cold season operations outlined above show the magnitude of the tasks which the soldiers were to undertake within the next few months. Thorough preparations were made, regardless of expenditure. Indeed, Lord Dufferin was prepared to do anything within his power for a speedy pacification of Upper Burma. The Burmese affair had done much to damage his reputation at home and abroad. He became extremely sensitive over it. This is

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[145] The Times, 16 February 1886, p.5.

[146] HC, vol. 85, p.35.

shown by his reaction to a letter of the Queen Empress. The Queen suggested, seemingly with no intention to notify her disapproval of Dufferin's policy, that sufficient troops should be sent to Upper Burma and that they should not be too scattered.[147] But Lord Dufferin seems to have reacted sharply. He wrote: "Lord Dufferin cannot help feeling that Your Majesty is under the misapprehension, which seems to prevail generally in England, that we have stinted the Burmese authorities in the matter of troops, &c."[148] Moreover, Dufferin's anxiety to repair his damaged reputation is seen in his attempt to convince scores of British dignitaries at home and in India by distributing to them privately printed copies of his October Memorandum prepared in defence of his Upper Burma policy.[149]

The Secretary of State for India was no less anxious. Lord Cross, who came to office in August 1886, had already begun to feel the weight of the Burmese affair. He wrote to Dufferin on 8 September that "we may hope to rest for a time so far as Parliament is concerned, but the interest felt in the proceedings there is very great".[150] Cross was prepared to support Dufferin in every possible way to achieve a quick end to the war. He wrote, in the same letter, "that whatever for the present & for the future is required will be granted, as the most efficient and certainly in the end the most economical way of pacifying the country". This assurance was, however, accompanied

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[147] DP, Reel 516, From Queen-Empress, No. 36, 6 August 1886.

[148] Ibid., To Queen-Empress, No. 49, 8 September 1886.

[149] A.T.Q.Stewart, The Pagoda War (London 1972), pp. 171-172.

[150] DP, Reel 516, From Sec. of State, No. 51.

by a word of reminder to the effect that if the delay in pacifying Upper Burma had so far been caused by any shortage of man-power that was the responsibility of the authorities on the spot, because in February last the Home Authorities were informed that no more troops were necessary. In a subsequent letter of 20 October, Cross appeared to be more emphatic and categorical in giving his assurance to Dufferin. He wrote: "Burmah must be a success, and you will have my entire support in making it so."[151]

Thus, so far as man-power and resources were concerned, there was to be no problem. By the end of October 1886/a huge force - 25,129 officers and men - was ready in Upper Burma.[152] This augmentation of the force, as has been noted in the previous chapter, necessitated the appointment of Lt. General Macpherson, the Commander in Chief of the Madras Army. But General Macpherson died on 20 October, soon after his arrival in Burma.[153] Consequently, General Sir Frederick Roberts, the Commander in Chief of the Indian Army, was ordered to transfer his headquarters temporarily to Burma and assume command of the whole of the troops in that province.[154]

General Sir Frederick Roberts' appointment clearly reflects Lord Dufferin's anxiety to settle the Burmese affair once and for all. It was undoubtedly a wise decision on three grounds. First, his appointment, though it was not favoured by the military authorities

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[151] DP, Reel 516, From Sec. of State, No.60 .

[152] Cmd. 4962, 1887, pp. 52-53, Statement showing the Strength of Troops in Burmah after 20th October 1886.

[153] MLEI, vol. 966, M 12083/1887, p.3.

[154] Cmd. 4962, 1887, p.144, Letter from Sec. to Govt. of India to Adjutant-General, 27 October 1886. General Roberts began his career in 1851 as a member of the Bengal Artillery. He fought in the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 and in the Afghan Wars between 1878 and 1880. From 1881-1885 he commanded the Madras Army. In 1885 he was given the command of the Indian Army. He was very popular among the soldiers.

at home,[155] was likely to produce a calming effect on public opinion in general. Secondly, Sir Frederick knew all about the arrangements for the winter operations, and was personally on good terms with the head of the civil administration at Mandalay and the Brigadiers.[156] Thirdly, it was reported that the Burmese peasantry, being extremely superstitious, might think that General Macpherson was killed by magic worked against him and as such they might be encouraged to resist.[157] If so, the appointment of General Frederick Roberts, the biggest of the Kala generals in India, was likely to neutralise that magic effect. The Secretary of State entirely supported Dufferin's action. He wrote:

> "I, as you know, entirely agree with your policy as to making every possible use of Roberts and our forces this cold season, so as to be able to get them back again as soon as possible, only taking great care that they do not leave too soon, or we should have to do the work over again which would be terrible."[158]

Immediately after his arrival at Mandalay on 18 November General Roberts met the top civil and military officials at a conference and discussed the question of military police. Several decisions were taken. The purpose was to build up a large police force so that the results of the cold season operations might be consolidated simultaneously.[159] The troops could occupy territories

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[155] DP, Reel 516, Cross to Dufferin, No. 64, 10 November 1886, and Cross to Dufferin, No. 70, 23 December 1886.

[156] Sir Alfred Lyall, The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava (London 1905), pp. 129-130.

[157] The Times, 22 October 1886, p.3.

[158] DP, Reel 516, Cross to Dufferin, No. 66, 25 November 1886.

[159] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, February 1887 (Police), p.153.

but they certainly could not hold them effectively without the help of a strong police force. So the strength of the force was fixed at 16,000 men, of whom at the outset 9,000 might be Indians and 7,000 Burmans. The proportion was, however, to be changed eventually to 8,000 Indians and 8,000 Burmans.[160] General Roberts was in favour of a strong force of Burmese police. Thus, he wrote on 24 November:

> "Burmans have not hitherto been looked upon as furnishing good material for police, but I trust that we may find some means of remedying any defects which may appear to be inherent in the race for there are large tracts of country which, on account of their extreme unhealthiness, cannot possibly be garrisoned either by soldiers or police from Northern India; for these localities we must ultimately depend upon natives of the country, and it is absolutely necessary therefore that we should train them for duty."[161]

The meeting also recommended the amalgamation of the levies and military police. The reason was that the men from northern India, especially old soldiers, were not happy at being commanded by civil officers and were jealous of the levies commanded by military officers. For instance, a valuable contingent of 84 Muzbi Sikhs who came from the old regiment, the 23rd Pioneer, were discontented.[162]

Simultaneously, attention was given to the purely military aspects of the operations. The operations of the first ten months had decisively proved the effectiveness of cavalry and mounted infantry.[163]

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[160] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, February 1887 (Police), p.155.

[161] MLEI, vol. 991, M 5569/1887, p.9, Note on the Present Military Situation in Upper Burma by General Roberts, 24 November 1886.

[162] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, February 1887 (Police), p.154.

[163] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753/1886, pp. 34, 79, 84, 101, and vol. 959, M 5837/1886, p.34.

General White, commanding the Field Force, however, put special emphasis on cavalry, as he thought that mounted infantry on ponies were not able to catch the leaders of the rebellion.[164] But the General knew that he could not expect sufficient cavalry in Burma, as it was an expensive arm, more especially because the Burmese climate was deadly to imported horses.[165] He had, therefore, no alternative but to make what he could out of the country ponies. It should be noted that, when the Expeditionary Force entered Upper Burma in 1885, a small body of mounted Infantry raised and equipped by Major Browne accompanied the force.[166] By the middle of September 1886 the original body had dwindled to forty men. Although most of these men were still in the field, they would soon leave Upper Burma.[167] So General White had to start from scratch.

By October the General commanding had at his disposal a compact force of 825 mounted rifles, raised, trained and equipped by the efforts of Colonel Penn Symons.[168] Symons took every possible care to make the ponies suitable for operations. On 31 October 1886 he

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[164] MLEI, vol. 961, White's letter No. L/262, 17 July 1886, p.5, vide No. 117 of 1886. See also "The Pacification of Burmah" by Demetrius C.Boulger in The National Review, vol. XIII, March to August 1889 (London), p.513.

[165] Durand, The Life of Field Marshal Sir George White, vol. 1 (London and Edin. 1915), p.346, White's letter to the Commander in Chief, Indian Army, 31 July 1886. In an anonymous article entitled "The Conquest of Burma" published in 1887 in The Edinburgh Review (vol. CLXV, p.503) the author tried to prove that unlike the low-lying lands of Lower Burma the higher lands of the upper province were favourable to imported horses.

[166] IMP, vol. 2768, p.402.

[167] IUBP, vol. 2967, August 1887 (Public), p.233.

[168] Lt. Col. Penn Symons, who was Asst. Adjutant-General for Musketry, Madras, was specially selected by General White for the task. He arrived at Mandalay on 16 September 1886, ibid., p.232.

issued a circular Memorandum to all officers which among other things laid down instructions that the ponies should be accustomed to stand fire, both in the lines and in the field, and that mounted infantry drills should be practised on foot and on pony back.[169] Thus within a short time the force was ready to take the field. It was split up into eleven companies, each consisting of twenty-five British and fifty native men and placed at Bhamo, Shwebo, Chindwin, Myingyan, Pagan, Minbu, Taungdwingyi, Pyinmana, Yamethin, Hlingdet and Meiktila.[170]

> "The chief objects held in view", wrote Colonel Symons, "have been, with the utmost regard to economy, to make the best use of the materials at hand and to provide a means of transporting infantry soldiers with greater rapidity and less fatigue to themselves than they could march in an exhausting climate, or against an enemy capable of dispersing and retreating faster than our foot soldiers could pursue with success."[171]

By November a proposal was made to gradually increase the companies of mounted infantry from seventy-five to one hundred men each, with a view to eventually setting the cavalry free to return to India in the next spring.[172]

With the re-organisation of troops, military police and mounted infantry, efforts were also made to meet the other requirements of the operations. General White paid special attention to the transport aspect because of his bitter experience with the cooly corps. He

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[169] IUBP, vol. 2967, August 1887 (Public), p.236.

[170] Ibid., pp. 233-234.

[171] Ibid., p.233.

[172] Cmd. 4962, pp. 188-189.

wrote "I do not advocate cooly corps; difficult to depend in jungle. We may have to ask for mules to supplement local pony transport, as supply is limited."[173] The supply of ponies was really too limited to meet the demands for transport as well as mounted infantry. Attempts were, however, made to purchase ponies from the Shan States through the friendly Sawbwas of Yawnghwe, Thibaw and Mobye, and the Chief Commissioner authorised the expenditure of Rs. 10,000 each by the Deputy Commissioners of Mandalay, Kyaukse and Pyinmana for the purpose.[174] Rs. 10,000 were also placed at the disposal of the Deputy Commissioner of Pagan, who might try to get ponies from the Yaw country. Some 3,000 transport mules were brought in from India. Arrangements were also made for the employment of locally hired carriages for ambulance and transport purposes.[175]

Care was taken to improve the river transport. The Government of India, in consultation with General White, ordered the preparation of several river craft.[176] These were: two stern-wheelers, to carry 150 men and fifty ponies, and to have a raised tower for a machine gun; two launches, each to carry twenty men; and one stern-wheeler, to carry one Gardiner gun on a raised platform. This last one was specially prepared to stand the current of the river

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[173] MLEI, vol. 962, M 9126/1886, p.2.

[174] BMP, vol. 2664A, September 1886 (Mil. Transport), p.1. The Shan States were a great source of supply of ponies for the British in Lower Burma. Thus in 1881 some 1,322 ponies were imported into Lower Burma from the Shan country. See Archibald Ross Colquhoun, Amongst the Shans (London 1885), p.278.

[175] MMLD, vol. 136, M 9471/1886, p.2. The Transport Department was directed by Captain Cather.

[176] Cmd. 4962, p.32.

Chindwin.[177]

Simultaneously, medical requirements for the field hospitals were applied for,[178] and every step was taken to ensure the troops were supplied. Early in June 1886 Colonel Laughton, the Principal Commissariat Officer, had made a proposal for a stock of preserved provisions for the use of the British troops. These were: 677,880 pounds of preserved meat, 84,735 pounds of preserved potatoes, and 42,367 pounds of compressed vegetables.[179] General White felt strongly the need of these provisions.[180]

Permanent telegraph lines, supplemented by the field telegraph, were pushed out to all important posts, and systems of visual signalling were elaborated in each brigade.[181]

Last, and not least, for the free movement of troops on land, a circular was issued on 1 October 1886 to the Deputy Commissioners of Shwebo, Ye-U, Chindwin, Sagaing, Ava, Kyaukse, Myingyan, Pagan, Minbu, Yamethin and Pyinmana providing for cutting and clearing lines 100 feet broad through the jungle from post to post.[182] This was confirmed by a subsequent circular of October 16.[183] The views

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[177] Cmd. 4962, p.32.

[178] MLEI, vol. 965, M 13100/1886. The Medical Department was run by Deputy Surgeon-General Farrell.

[179] Ibid., vol. 962, M 9454/1886, p.2.

[180] Ibid. See also MDI (Original Drafts), vol. 2288, M 10104/1886, Letter from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy, 4 November 1886.

[181] The Engineering Department was under Captain Dorward.

[182] BMP, vol. 2664A, October 1886 (Military), p.4.

[183] IUBP , vol. Z/P/2035, July 1887 (Public), p.192.

of the Chief Commissioner in this latter circular appeared to be very emphatic. The district administrators were told that no road work and, more especially, no undertaking for clearing broad tracks through the jungle from post to post, should on any account be allowed to stop during the present season by reason of supposed failure or shortness of financial allotments. They were further told that if funds at their disposal, or allotted to the Engineers, fell short, or were likely to fall short, prompt intimation should be sent to the Chief Commissioner by telegraph and a further allotment should be applied for. The Chief Commissioner even authorised expenditure beyond existing budget allotments so long as it was confined to roads which were to be used for military operations.

Thus the preparations for the cold season operations were thorough and complete. Equally thorough was the plan on which the operations were to be conducted. All established posts were divided into convenient groups. Each group was to be provided with sufficient troops of all arms to garrison all the posts simultaneously, while a flying column, composed of troops and equipment specially adapted to the peculiarities of the neighbouring country, was at all times to be ready equipped and available to take the field.

The general occupation of the country was to radiate from the existing posts. Whenever police were available, they were to relieve the troops in the occupation of the intermediate posts on lines of communication. The advance of the occupation was, as far as possible, to be effected by the establishment of successive

lines of posts, carefully planned[184] and with good communications between them all, and by constant and systematic patrols. Outside these lines of posts the chief military operations would be undertaken, and inside them the civil officers, supported by the troops and police, were to direct their attention to the settlement of the country.

This was, however, the general scheme of operations. The principles of operations were also clearly laid down.[185] Instead of a few movements with one or two comparatively large forces, a series of minor operations were to be carried on by a number of small flying columns, under carefully selected leaders. Each of these columns was to be composed of 2 mountain guns, about thirty mounted infantry, from fifty to one hundred British infantry, and from 100 to 200 native infantry, with as many cavalry as could be made available. These should all work in co-ordination from a number of different parts, in order, if possible, to hem in the 'dacoits' and to ensure every part of the country being visited. When any serious resistance was expected, or when the enemy had taken up a difficult position, guns were to be used before infantry were committed to the attack. Finally, whenever practicable, the cavalry was to be sent to a flank, and try to fall upon the enemy and follow them up as they retreated from their stockades.

The area of operations was also fixed. Generally speaking, it was to extend from the old frontier of Lower Burma northwards

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[184] These posts, although hastily constructed, were very carefully planned. Every effort was made to ensure the safety of the garrisons therein. See MLEI, vol. 982, M 8818/1888, Short Report on Hasty Defences used in Upper Burma during 1885-1888.

[185] MLEI, vol. 963, M 10629/1886, pp. 1-2, Adjutant-General to General Macpherson, 27 August 1886.

to the Shan hills on the east and the Kubo Valley on the west. The distribution of troops was, therefore, made accordingly. The entire Field Force was deployed in seven selected areas under six Brigadiers-General and one separate command: the First Brigade under General East with the headquarters at Mandalay, the Second Brigade under General Cox at Bhamo, the Third Brigade under General Lockhart at Pyinmana, the Fourth Brigade under General Anderson at Myingyan, the Fifth Brigade under General Stewart at Shwebo, the Sixth Brigade under General Low at Minbu, and the separate command under Lt. Colonel Toker at Kindat on the Chindwin.[186] The effect of this distribution was that almost all the strategically important areas in the plains of Upper Burma were covered.[187]

The cold season operations extended from about the middle of November 1886 to the end of April 1887. Numerous engagements took place during these five and a half months of operations. The official papers give numerous major engagements.[188] A brief account of some of these engagements is, perhaps, necessary to understand the basic pattern of the cold season operations.

Operations against Bo Shwe west of the Lower Irrawaddy commenced about the middle of December. At first two columns were put into

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[186] The following is the distribution of the Field Force in Upper Burma on 1 November 1886: First Brigade 7,824; Second Brigade 1,494; Third Brigade 2,314; Fourth Brigade 3,406; Fifth Brigade 2,953; Sixth Brigade 4,337; and separate Chindwin command 907. Besides these, there were 2,369 troops en route for Upper Burma.

[187] See the map at the back showing distribution of troops.

[188] MLEI, vol. 969, No. 75 of 1887, pp. 19-29, List of Engagements.

action. One column moved from Salin by forced marches and occupied Sidoktaya on 16 December. A second column advanced from Pyawbwe in pursuit of Bo Shwe who was in Padein. By the middle of December, 1886 Padein, Ngape, and Paeng were occupied one after another. But the advances were not easy ones. Long stretches of the road were effectively blocked with fallen trees and rocks.189 The Rangoon Gazette reported: "Trees and bamboos had been felled so as to obstruct the road and fill up defiles, nullahs &c., one of these obstructions was half a mile in length."[190] Thus the Burmans did all that was possible to arrest the advance of the British troops. But the latter persisted and pursued Bo Shwe into the Arakan hills till the ground became impracticable. This close pursuit seems to have seriously affected Bo Shwe's position. It was reported that he left Padein on the approach of the column with 1,000 men, that this following was reduced to 450 when he retreated from Ngape, and that when Paeng was occupied his following had still further fallen.[191]

Bo Shwe's flight into the Arakan Yoma left the British in absolute control of his tract. The British lost no time in consolidating their position so as to prevent Bo Shwe from regaining his hold on the plains. Three steps were taken. First, posts were established at Sidoktaya, Paeng, Ngape, Padein and Pyawbwe, and supplies were quickly thrown into these places.[192] The effect of this was that the

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[189] MLEI, vol. 968, M 3047/1887, p.8.

[190] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, vol. VII, 7 January 1887, p.5.

[191] MLEI, vol. 968, M 3047/1887, p.9.

[192] Ibid.

entire line along the eastern slopes of the Arakan Yoma was firmly held by the British, so that Bo Shwe's area of activity was virtually confined within the ranges of the Arakan hills. Secondly, within the plains between the Arakan Yoma and the Irrawaddy several columns were at work, presumably against the partisans of Bo Shwe, while the civil authorities backed by troops made every effort to give the people a feeling of confidence in the stability of British rule. Thirdly, in the south of the tract three columns from Lower Burma were placed in order to prevent any bands from breaking back towards the old frontier. The plan was a complete success. Bo Shwe and his men, locked up in the Arakan ranges, grew impatient to break through the British line. But the British would not allow them to do so. Several operations were undertaken during January, February and March, but the engagements were confined within the Arakan ranges.[193] Bo Shwe was never able to force the British into battle outside these ranges. His power was rapidly broken, so that by the end of March 1887 he was near the end of his exploits.[194] Even his trusted lieutenant Thatto seems to have lost confidence in his leadership. Thatto entered into negotiations with the British.[195] He broke away from Bo Shwe after a quarrel,[196] which tends to suggest that he had made a desperate attempt to convince his leader about the futility of resistance to British authority.

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[193] MLEI, vol. 968, M 2816/1887, p.3; vol. 969, M 5410/1887, pp. 3-5 and vol. 969, M 4531/1887, p.3.

[194] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.28.

[195] MLEI, vol. 970, M 6993/1887, p.2.

[196] Ibid., vol. 969, M 4792/1887, p.2.

So far as Bo Shwe is concerned, the British had undoubtedly achieved their objective. Although Bo Shwe was still free, he was no longer a threat to British authority. The situation in the south-western tract of Upper Burma had completely changed. The British were now in absolute control of the tract. The 'King of Minbu'[197] was now a fugitive, his capture being only a question of time. But pongyi Ôktama, who was active in the area immediately to the north of Bo Shwe's tract, was yet to be dealt with. Several operations were undertaken against him between January and March.[198] But they do not appear to have made any serious impression upon his influence.[199] It was, however, expected that the absolute control obtained over Bo Shwe's tract would eventually help the British to track the pongyi bo down.

Operations against Hla-U between the Chindwin and Irrawaddy rivers began from the middle of November. Four columns were simultaneously at work against him. But he was always out of reach.[200] General Roberts attributed this to Hla-U's continual movement from one spot to another and the denseness of the jungle.[201] However, the continuous pursuit by British troops weakened and demoralised Hla-U's bands, so that by the end of December 1886 three of his cousins together with 55 bos and 165 rank and file submitted to

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[197] See above, p.106.

[198] MLEI, vol. 968, M 4306/1887, pp. 5-6; M 3487/1887, p.2.

[199] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.29.

[200] MLEI, vol. 965, M 130/1887, pp. 11, 13; M 325/1887, p.4; vol. 968, M 2814/1887, p.3; Fitzgerald's Diary, Reel 605, November 1886.

[201] Ibid., vol. 991, M 5569/1887, General Roberts' Second Note on the Military Situation in Upper Burma, 6 February 1887.

the British.[202] Even Hla-U expressed himself willing to surrender, provided his life was spared.[203] The British quickly indicated their readiness to spare his life if he gave himself up within seven days.[204] They even gave him the option to surrender, if he preferred, to the Thathanabaing at Mandalay or to the local pongyis.[205] Accordingly, the Thathanabaing sent a pongyi to persuade Hla-U to surrender.[206] But the pongyi emissary failed to make contact with him nor did he submit to the local pongyis.[207] So operations against his forces were resumed immediately after the seven days' grace expired.[208] His power rapidly declined, so that in February 1887 he was reported to be wandering about the country with only eight followers,[209] until eventually he was killed by one of his own men in April 1887.[210]

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[202] MLEI, vol. 967, M 854/1887, No. 422-B.

[203] Ibid., M 1162/1887, p.2.

[204] Ibid., M 2303/1887, p.1.

[205] The Times, 13 January 1887, p.5. This shows how anxious the British were to obtain his surrender.

[206] The Times, 17 January 1887, p.5.

[207] MLEI, vol. 967, M 2604/1887, pp. 1-2.

[208] Ibid., p.2.

[209] MLEI, vol. 968, M 2816/1887, p.2.

[210] There seems to be a little confusion as to the exact date of Hla-U's death. The Officer Commanding, Magyioke, telegraphed on 17 April that Hla-U was killed by one of his men on 15 April, while the Asst. Supt. of Police, Ye-U, reported that he died on 13 April and that his wife was present at the time of his death, ibid., vol. 970, M 6692/1887. But the official History of the war says that he was killed on 19 April, History of the Third Burmese War, III, p.23. This seems to be corroborated by Col. Fitzgerald's Diary, which records that the Colonel heard about his death on 19 April.

Hla-U's death relieved the British of considerable anxiety. This is clear from one of General White's demi-officials to General Roberts, dated 6 February 1887. White wrote:

> "If they /Bo Shwe and Hla-U/ remain at large it will be most damaging evidence of the want of hold we have on the people and a dangerous instance of the impunity with which our greatest efforts can be defeated."[211]

So Hla-U's death was a great achievement of the cold season operations. True, he was not killed in action. But his wandering about the country as a fugitive, the gradual reduction in the number of his followers, and his eventual death at the hands of his own men- all were no doubt the effects of persistent British efforts to break him. His death secured a considerable tract around Shwebo, Ye-U, Sagaing and Alon, and thus paved the way for the pacification of the great Chindwin Valley. Of course, Nga Yaing was still holding out somewhere in the Shwebo district, but it would not be difficult to track him down, as the area around the river Mu had been cleared from Hla-U's bands.

Operations against the Kyimyindaing Prince and Buddha Yaza in the Pyinmana-Yamethin region began simultaneously. General Lockhart carried on these operations by means of small columns. He gave the rebels no rest, pursuing them wherever they went.[212] The result was that both these formidable leaders of Burmese resistance were quickly dealt with. The Kyimyindaing Prince was killed in action on 1 January,[213]

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[211] GSWP, vol. 3.

[212] MLEI, vol. 968, M 3047/1887, p.7.

[213] Ibid., M 4306/1887, p.5.

while Buddha Yaza, hard pressed by British troops, made his escape into the Shan territory by the middle of the same month.[214] With Buddha Yaza's fall the troubles in the Pyinmana-Yamethin region ended.[215]

The occupation of Wuntho was also successfuly accomplished. The decision to send troops to Wuntho was taken by the British against their better judgement, since as we have seen they had no desire to carry war into the Wuntho territory. So in December military preparations and conciliatory attempts went on hand in hand. An ultimatum was sent to the Sawbwa on 21 December asking him to meet G.D.Burgess, the Commissioner of the Northern Division, at Manle on 3 January 1887. The Sawbwa's personal safety was guaranteed, but he was warned that if he failed to come British troops would advance upon Wuntho.[216] But the Sawbwa did not come. In a letter to the Deputy Commissioner of Myadaung dated 26 December, he explained that he dared not attend the meeting because he had "presentiments of being arrested and transported to a foreign place like the Ministers /Burmese/".[217] Burgess was not satisfied. He described the letter as "inconclusive and unsatisfactory".[218] He was now convinced that the Wuntho Sawbwa would never submit unless he was forced to do so. Burgess put forth his views in a letter to the Secretary for Upper Burma, dated 3 January:

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[214] MLEI, vol. 968, M.4306/1887, p.14.

[215] "The Pacification of Upper Burma: A Vernacular History", JBRS, 1941 XXXI, Part II, p.94. It is interesting to note that following the Buddha Yaza Minlaung's escape into the Shan country two other Buddha Yazas appeared in different parts of Upper Burma. They were eventually dealt with - one submitted to the British, while the other was captured, MLEI, vol. 969, M 5410, p.9; M 4792, pp. 1-2 and vol. 970, M 6993, p.2. As it has already been mentioned, the appearance of more than one Buddha Yaza at a time might be a reason why the movement of Buddha Yaza Minlaung, which was so strong in Pyinmana-Yamethin region, quickly faded away after his fall.

[216] BFP, vol. 3582A, January 1887 (Foreign Dept.), p.9.

[217] Ibid., p.14.

[218] Ibid., p.12. Burgess's Letter to GOC, 2nd Brigade, No. 4-41, 3 January 1887.

> "There can be no doubt that the Sawbwa has been cleverly taking advantage of the interval between the overthrow of Burmese and the firm and complete establishment of British administration to extend his authority over various and numerous pieces of territory belonging to the Kingdom of Burma, in the fond hope of founding a strong independent State under his own rule."[219]

So, the British troops were ordered to move towards Wuntho. Two columns were sent. One started from Katha and the other from Shwebo. The commanders were ordered to keep up communication with each other by every possible means, and to enter Wuntho simultaneously.

While the columns were proceeding, the Deputy Commissioner of Myadaung sent a letter to the Sawbwa giving him one more chance. He wrote:

> "I shall be prepared to precede the main part of the troops and advance to Wuntho with a small escort only in order to meet you, and settle the questions at issue peacefully. I expect that you will personally meet me before I reach Wuntho."[220]

The personal safety of the Sawbwa and his father was also guaranteed in a special circular, dated 5 January.[221] This time the Sawbwa agreed to meet the Commissioner, but not in the manner the latter suggested; he proposed to meet the British at a place called Baingbin on 18 January.[222] Burgess did not agree and, in a letter of 10 January, commanded the Sawbwa to meet him on the way to Wuntho.[223] Soon the news came that the Sawbwa and his father, having read the

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[219] BFP, vol. 3582A, January 1887 (Foreign Dept.), p.13, Burgess' Letter to Secretary for Upper Burma, 3 January 1887.

[220] Ibid., p.15.

[221] Ibid., p.17.

[222] Ibid., p.19. Letter from Sawbwa to Burgess, 9 January 1887.

[223] Ibid.

letter, were afraid and had taken to flight, accompanied by their officers.[224] Burgess, who accompanied the Katha column, at once proceeded to Wuntho with the cavalry and arrived there on 15 January. The next day reinforcements of infantry and guns followed, the whole of the Katha column arriving on 19 January. The Shwebo column reached Wuntho on 26 January.

The taking of Wuntho by force and the flight of the Sawbwa did not, however, change the attitude of the British. They were still prepared to accept the Sawbwa if the latter came in and submitted. They did not mean to dethrone him. This display of force was necessary to make him and his counterparts in Upper Burma understand that the British were always prepared to use force if their authority was disregarded. The Chief Commissioner telegraphed Burgess on 16 January:

> "Please do not let present occurence prevent your making every effort to replace Sawbwa in power. We do not want either to govern Wuntho or to arrange a new ruler there if we can manage to get Sawbwa back. I am sending up Kinwun Mingyi, who was formerly close patron of Wuntho, to work under you. I want you to employ him to administer country in behalf of Sawbwa with full powers of Sawbwa, in hope that he will be able to get Sawbwa to return, to resume power, and to trust us."[225]

Kinwun Mingyi arrived at Wuntho on 2 February and opened negotiations with the Sawbwa.[226] Eventually the Sawbwa agreed to come in to discuss matters, provided that the force, except for a small garrison, was withdrawn from Wuntho. So seventy-five rifles and

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[224] BFP, vol. 3582A, January 1887 (Foreign Dept.), p.21.

[225] Ibid., p.24.

[226] MLEI, vol. 968, M 3048/1887, p.1.

thirty-eight military police were left with Kinwun Mingyi and the Commissioner at Wuntho and the rest of the force was withdrawn.[227] This was quickly followed by a settlement according to which the Sawbwa agreed to pay Rs. 50,000 and surrender all arms, except 350 muskets. These terms were fully complied with by 1 April, on which date the remainder of the troops were withdrawn from Wuntho.

With the occupation of Wuntho one of the most important objectives of the cold season operations was achieved. The ease with which the task was accomplished may lead one to think that perhaps the anxiety of the British regarding Wuntho, as reflected in their proceedings from beginning to end was not justified. This is not correct. Two things should be taken into consideration in this connection. First, as we have seen, the British sent troops to Wuntho against their better judgement. Under the circumstances, a bloodless occupation of the territory, which by no means lessened the gravity of the problem, was the best thing the British could have expected. Secondly, the possibility of a stiff resistance was never ignored. The number of soldiers and guns sent to Wuntho is itself a proof of this.[228] The sudden flight of the Sawbwa only saved the British from a great many complications which might have arisen from a bloody fight. Indeed, the British did not think that the problem regarding Wuntho would be solved so easily.

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[227] MLEI, vol. 969, M 5410, p.7.

[228] 984 rifles, 4 guns and 3 squadrons of cavalry were sent to Wuntho.

Simultaneously, other objectives of the cold season operations were also achieved with little difficulty. The Ruby Mines were occupied by the end of December without any serious opposition.[229] General Stewart, who personally commanded the Expedition, was able to reach a friendly understanding with the leading ruby merchants.[230] The Pakangyi tract and the Yaw country were occupied and firmly held, while the exploration and pacification of the Chindwin and Kubo Valleys were accomplished. Finally, the Expedition which was sent to the Shan States proper under Colonel Stedman by the middle of January 1887 was equally successful. It saved the Yawnghwe Sawbwa from the confederates, especially from the Lawk Sawk Sawbwa, who was a leading man of the Limbin Confederacy.[231] The confederates gave little or no resistance. The Lawk Sawk Sawbwa, with his whole following, retreated to Lawk Sawk, while the Limbin Prince fled south towards Karenni, being anxious to come in but insecure as to his reception by the British. Above all, a strong military base called Fort Stedman was established on the Yawnghwe Lake, from where the Superintendent of the Shan States would open negotiations with the Shan Chiefs.

The cold season operations officially ended on 30 April 1887.[232] As we have seen, the operations had been highly successful. But, in spite of that, the possibility of occasional disturbances was not ignored.

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[229] MLEI, vol. 967, M 854/1887, Field Operations, Burma-Sec. B, No. 426-B; vol. 968, M 4306/1887, p.11.

[230] Ibid., vol. 967, M 854/1887, Field Operations, Burma-Sec. B, No. 2.

[231] Ibid., vol. 969, M 5410, p.5.

[232] Ibid., vol. 968, No. 40 of 1887, p.2.

> "We consider", the Viceroy wrote at the end of February 1887, "that the operations have been highly successful, but although they have had the effect of almost putting down dacoity for the time, we are quite prepared to find that it may reappear to some extent, as soon as the hot weather comes on, and the troops settle down into summer quarters."[233]

So, in view of such a possibility, the earlier decision that all the troops who formed part of the Expeditionary Force should be brought back to India after the cold season operations was cancelled. In fact, the good results secured during the extended operations of the past cold weather could only be made permanent by keeping a constant pressure upon the rebels and the lawless elements in the population.

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[233] MLEI, vol. 968, No. 40 of 1887, p.1.

Chapter Five

SIR CHARLES CROSTHWAITE: THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW VILLAGE SYSTEM

Sir Charles Bernard was succeeded as Chief Commissioner by Sir Charles Crosthwaite towards the end of February 1887. Bernard is said to have vacated his post for health reasons.[1] He had not been well for some time past. This might be the effect of the last fifteen months' continuous exertion. His doctors advised him to leave Burma before the hot weather of 1887.[2] But an examination of Dufferin's correspondence with the Secretary of State for India shows that Bernard's removal from Burma about that time was inevitable, whether he was sick or not. It was basically a matter of policy, which reflected the Home Authorities' anxiety for a speedy pacification of Upper Burma. The Home Authorities did not hold a favourable opinion of him. This seems to have been the effect of his original anti-annexation stand. Lord Randolph Churchill wrote to Lord Dufferin as early as November 1885: "In this office I find Bernard's opinions carry little weight. He is considered essentially a weak, timid,undecided person."[3] Although Bernard changed his views regarding annexation and Dufferin tried to convince the Home Authorities on this point,[4] the latter's opinion of

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[1] DP, Reel 516, from Dufferin to Queen, 31 March 1887.

[2] Ibid., Reel 518, to Cross, 25 January 1887. See also The Rangoon Times, 4 March 1887, p.417; The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 11 February 1887, p.2 and The Times of India (Bombay),4 February 1887,p.4.

[3] DP, Reel 517, from Churchill to Dufferin, 10 November 1885. The Home Authorities' attitude towards Bernard was not unkown to Her Majesty's Indian subjects. One leading newspaper, published from Calcutta, reported: "Mr. Bernard, who is apparently opposed to the annexation of Burma, is evidently not in high favour with the present authorities." See The Bengalee (Calcutta), 2 January 1886, p. 1.

[4] DP, Reel 518, from Dufferin to Churchill, 20 November 1885; to Kimberley, 10 March 1886, and to Cross, 5 August 1886.

Bernard remained unchanged. Lord Kimberley, Churchill's successor, also did not hold a favourable opinion of Bernard.[5] The failure to make any substantial progress regarding pacification together with the unfavourable reports by Moylan, The Times' correspondent, made the matter gradually worse for Bernard. In July Kimberley advised Dufferin to remove Bernard.[6] This was no doubt a difficult situation for Dufferin, for he personally was very satisfied with Bernard[7] and he was convinced that Bernard was unjustly discredited by Moylan.[8] Furthermore, if he removed Bernard now this would simply mean admission of the failure of his administration to cope with the Burma affair successfully - a fact which he was not ready to admit. But he had practically no choice. All that he could do was to hold Bernard in his post a little longer. He certainly could not hold him for any longer period, as the latter's reputation was considerably damaged in the eyes of the Home politicians.[9] In August Lord Cross, Kimberley's successor, renewed the suggestion that Bernard should be removed.[10] Dufferin replied in the same month that as he had no better candidate available it would be wise to keep Bernard in his post until Crosthwaite, who had gone to England on sick leave, should again be fit for service.[11] In a subsequent letter he advanced a moral

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[5] DP, Reel 516, from Kimberley to Dufferin, 25 March 1886.

[6] Ibid., from Kimberley to Dufferin, 30 July 1886.

[7] Ibid., from Dufferin to Kimberley, 26 February 1886, and Reel 517, October Memorandum.

[8] Ibid., Reel 517, to Cross, 27 September 1886.

[9] Stewart, The Pagoda War (London 1972), p.170.

[10] DP, Reel 517, from Cross to Dufferin, 4 August 1886.

[11] Ibid., Reel 518, from Dufferin to Cross, 13 August 1886.

argument on the issue. He argued that as Bernard had borne all the heat of the day it would be unfair not to give him an opportunity to enjoy the good effects which were likely to result from the ensuing cold season operations and take a little credit for that.[12] Cross took a sympathetic view. He wrote that he had no wish whatever to see Bernard removed if Lord Dufferin was satisfied. "It is wholly contrary to my nature", he continued, "to desert a man who is unjustly accused . . . . . I do not think that I shall have any trouble about Bernard."[13] Thus Bernard remained at his post, surviving the fierce criticism of Moylan and the leading newspapers of Rangoon,[14] until he was relieved by Crosthwaite in February 1887.[15]

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[12] DP, Reel 517, to Cross, 3 September 1886.

[13] Ibid., Reel 516, from Cross to Dufferin, 20 October 1886.

[14] The Rangoon Times reported on 10 January 1887 that Bernard failed to make any strong impression of the power of the British nation in the Burmese mind. The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, in its report of 11 February 1887, attributed British set-backs in Upper Burma in the first year of occupation to Bernard's lenient policy. It wrote: "Bernard came down full of the ideas of the Lord Ripon School, about bringing forward the natives of the country and teaching them self-government. His faults have lain entirely on the side of a too great tenderness for those who least deserved it."

[15] When Dufferin realised that he would not be able to keep Bernard in his post for long he recommended him for the Punjab. But Lord Salisbury objected, saying that Bernard was hardly the man for the place, DP, Reel 516, from Cross to Dufferin, 20 October 1887. So Bernard returned to England to take up the appointment of secretary at the India Office in the department of revenue, statistics and commerce. He retired in 1901. See The Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford 1912), p.150.

Lord Dufferin's choice of Crosthwaite was well-grounded. He had a great deal of confidence in Crosthwaite, whom he regarded as a very sensible man and a skilful administrator.[16] Crosthwaite was no doubt one of the most experienced civil servants of his time. He entered the Indian civil service in 1857, and served in various revenue and judicial posts in the North-Western and Central Provinces.[17] Thus he had already had some thirty years experience as a civil servant before he took up the Burma appointment. This long experience also included a brief period of service in Lower Burma as officiating Chief Commissioner during Bernard's leave of absence in 1883-1884. This was perhaps the most important factor which led Dufferin to select him for Burma. His stay in Lower Burma, although brief, enabled him to learn the methods of the administration and become acquainted with the officers in the commission and the nature of the country and its people.[18] Thus he was better suited than most of his colleagues for the appointment in Burma. Dufferin wanted Crosthwaite to accept the job, so much so that he told Crosthwaite that it was in his opinion the post in all India most to be coveted, and that if he was not Viceroy he would choose Burma.[19] To Crosthwaite, however, this was an unnecessary stimulus, as ever since leaving Lower Burma in 1884 his ambition had been to succeed

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[16] DP, Reel 518, Dufferin to Cross, 25 January 1887; Reel 516, to Queen, 31 March 1887 and Reel 517, to Cross, 11 February 1887.

[17] The Times of India reported on 4 February 1887 that Crosthwaite carried with him a reputation as an administrator.

[18] Crosthwaite, The Pacification of Burma (London 1912), p.19; The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget reported on 4 February 1887 that Crosthwaite was already well-known and much respected in Burma.

[19] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.20.

Bernard.[20] So he gladly accepted the job. Dufferin was happy, especially because Crosthwaite was genuinely interested in Burma. He wrote to Cross that a real interest on the part of the officer concerned for a charge like Burma was something which should be taken into consideration.[21]

Crosthwaite's task was to build up a strong centralised civil administration in Upper Burma. As we know, civil administration was virtually in the background during the past cold season operations. The Government of India could not keep it in that position any longer, for that would simply mean that no real progress had been made towards pacification during the last fifteen months. So on 19 April 1887 they wrote to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India:

> "The military operations of the cold weather, which are now drawing towards a close, have been effectual in breaking up the various bands of dacoits which had infested the country, and we trust that it will now be possible for our establishments to apply themselves with more undivided attention to the ordinary duties of civil government than has been practicable hitherto."[22]

They even suggested, perhaps to show their confidence, that the time was not inopportune for the transfer of the functions of directing the administration from the Government of India to a Lieutenant Governor. This, they argued, would relieve the Indian Government of much of the detailed work which pressed upon it. It would also simplify the duties which devolved on the Chief Commissioner by

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[20] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.20.

[21] DP, Reel 517, from Dufferin to Cross, 20 October 1886.

[22] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, April 1887 (Public), p.167.

removing the necessity for continued references to the Government of India. Above all, a greater impulse would be given to local energy, and the people would respect and appreciate the power exercised for their benefit by a Government not too distant, and therefore too inaccessible to be understood.[23] This latter argument, so far as the work of pacification is concerned, seems to have been reasonable. If viewed in the light of the extent of territory and the numbers of the population, the existing form of government was undoubtedly inadequate to the needs of the united provinces. So the change, as suggested by the Indian Government, was likely to be very popular.[24]

But this suggestion did not meet with much encouragement from the Home Authorities. They were not convinced that the situation in Upper Burma was favourable for lieutenant governorship. Their feeling was reflected in the proceedings of the House of Commons in April. Mr. Howard Vincent, Member for Sheffield, asked the Under Secretary of State[25] if the submission of Upper Burma was complete and the country now accessible to British commercial enterprise.[26] The answer of the Under Secretary was in the affirmative, but he could not assure the House that there would not be a renewal of disturbances in the rainy season as several of the principal bos had not been captured.[27] The members of the House of Commons do not

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[23] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, April 1887 (Public), p.168.

[24] The Times (London), 24 May 1887, p.5. The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget reported on 11 February 1887: "We should be glad to see Burma made a lieutenant governorship."

[25] Sir John Gorst.

[26] Hansard, 3rd Series, vol. 313, p.477, House of Commons.

[27] Ibid.

appear to have been satisfied with the answer. Although the Under Secretary's reply implied that Upper Burma had ceased to be disturbed as a result of the past cold season operations, the reports of some of the leading newspapers during March and April spoke otherwise. The extremely pro-Government Rangoon Times reported:

> "It may be that prejudice blinds the general public to a great extent, but it is still a fact that each weekly official Budget contains a goodly number of petty engagements. Yesterday the raiding of Taungwindyee, a place that has been garrisoned by British troops for months, was reported. This does not look like the reign of peace and plenty."[28]

The Times reported a similar situation.[29] The Calcutta Press appeared to be more outspoken. They reported that the situation in Burma was very unsatisfactory, that raids by Burmans upon British outposts continued, and that numerous petty actions were still taking place. These reports certainly did not escape the notice of the Home Authorities. Mr. Bradlaugh, Member for Northampton, asked the Under Secretary whether these reports were true. The latter admitted them in part, thus contradicting his earlier reply to Howard Vincent.[30]

Indeed, the situation in Upper Burma was still far from being satisfactory. Crosthwaite had a Herculean task before him. There were numerous bos active in different parts of the country. There were, for example, Nga To and Nga Zeya in Mandalay,[31] Nga Yaing in

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[28] The Rangoon Times, 3 March 1887, p.412.

[29] The Times, 18 April 1887, p.5.

[30] Hansard, vol. 314, p.518, House of Commons, 26 April 1887.

[31] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States (Rangoon 1900), Part 1, vol. 1, p.156.

Shwebo,[32] Nga U, Nyo Pu and Min O in Ye-U and Sagaing,[33] Shwe Yan in Ava,[34] Bo Tok and Bo Cho in Myingyan,[35] the Shwegyobyu Prince in the Chindwin[36] and Bo Shwe and Ôktama in Minbu.[37] Evidently, some of these were formidable old bos still holding their own over a considerable part of the country. Bo Shwe, for example, although near the end of his exploits,[38] was still powerful, his orders being acknowledged and his men fed by the villagers of the Myothit and Minhla townships.[39] Ôktama looked more powerful; he was, in the words of Crosthwaite himself, "in full force".[40] Indeed, his influence in the northern part of Minbu was so deeply rooted that the exertions of the troops made little impression on it.[41] His authority not only remained unshaken but continued to grow.[42]

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[32] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States (Rangoon 1900), Part 1, vol. 1, p.160.

[33] Ibid., pp. 162-163.

[34] Ibid., p.163.

[35] Ibid., p.166.

[36] Ibid., p.164.

[37] Ibid., p.168.

[38] See above, p.198.

[39] HTWP, vol. 10, Note on the State of Upper Burma, 14 July 1888, p.3, Mss. Eur. E.254, India Office Library.

[40] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.32.

[41] See above, p.199.

[42] HTWP, Note on the State of Upper Burma, p.3.

The Shwegyobyu Prince, Shwe Yan, and Bo Tok were no less formidable than ever. Thus the task of the soldier was not yet ended. When Crosthwaite said that the task of the soldier was ended he meant that the period of absolute dependence on the soldier had ended.[43] With the larger bands of rebels and dacoits broken up, and with most of the strategically important areas covered by posts, the civil authorities backed by adequate police could now hope to make a real attempt towards establishing their hold.

Crosthwaite was convinced that the situation in Upper Burma could be effectually dealt with only by bringing every part of the country under intensive governmental care through a strong centralised civil administration. So he proposed to make the individual village the basic social and political unit.[44] This, he thought, would enable the authorities to eliminate elements of disorder by holding the village community responsible for everything that happened within the village tract. Obviously Crosthwaite's scheme would result in the breaking up of the larger units which existed in many places. But he did not see any other alternative. There was no hereditary aristocracy and no tribal or caste system. The only rank which was recognised was official: even the differences in wealth between man and man were insufficient to give any preponderating influence to individuals.[45] So he thought, perhaps

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[43] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.34.

[44] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), pp.838-839, Letter from officiating Chief Secretary to Chief Commissioner to Secretary to Govt. of India, 8 September 1887.

[45] Ibid., p.837; Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.22. See also Fielding Hall, A People at School (London 1906), p.28 and The Soul of a People (London 1898), p.54; Major M. Enriquez, Races of Burma (Calcutta 1923), p.34; Sangermano, A Description of the Burmese Empire (Rome 1883), p.126; Shway Yoe (George Scott), "The Burmese", Cornhill Magazine, vol. XLII, July to December 1880, pp. 584-585; A.R.McMahon, "The Situation in Burmah", The National Review, vol. VI, September to February 1885-1886, p.261.

reasonably, that the only form of organic life which Burmese society exhibited, namely, the village system, should be maintained and strengthened.[46]

Crosthwaite observed a tendency on the part of some of his officers who had served in Lower Burma to endeavour to model the administration on the lines to which they had grown accustomed in Lower Burma. Thus, in some districts, circles had already been enlarged, local village officials dismissed or dispensed with, and the system familiar to the people subverted.[47] Crosthwaite wanted to stop this practice immediately, for in Lower Burma he had observed the evils of neglecting the village system. He wrote:

> "The evils of neglecting the village system and allowing it to degenerate are amply exemplified in Lower Burma. There the village headman, generally styled Kyedangyi, had degenerated into a kind of village watchman and drudge; he is described as a person who has no influence in his village and whose orders no one will obey. This has been the natural result of the way in which he has been treated. With the exception of some small police powers he has been given no authority or status, and he is at the beck and call of every constable who comes to the village. He has no power to prevent strangers from coming to reside in his village, nor can he call upon them to account for themselves. However lawful and necessary may be the orders which he gives to the villagers, he cannot cause them to be obeyed, nor can he get the recusants punished without making a journey, in some cases very long, to the nearest Magistrate's Court."[48]

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[46] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), p.837.

[47] Ibid. In one place for 113 village headmen 16 circle officers were substituted.

[48] Ibid.,p.838.

From Crosthwaite's account it appears that the British neglected the village system in Lower Burma. It should however be noted that the village community in Lower Burma, as distinguished from that in Upper Burma, was traditionally weak, consisting of people belonging to diverse ethnic groups such as the Burmans, the Mons and the Arakanese.[49] Again, after the Burmese conquests in the eighteenth century, the Mons and the Arakanese were persecuted and their headmen, except such as were loyal to the new government, were displaced by Burmese Thugyis appointed from Ava.[50] This must have weakened the village community still further. But weak though it was, the village as a unit of administration had a definite pattern of its own with the headman performing certain functions in respect of collecting revenue and maintaining law and order within the village. When the British came to Lower Burma they at first left these functions largely unchanged.[51] Later these were restricted to revenue work only. It was thought that the Thugyi was taking advantage of his traditional position in society.[52] So he was relieved of his police functions and his fiscal responsibilities were considerably reduced.[53] Simultaneously the area of his circle

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[49] Hugh Tinker, The Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma (University of London, 1954), pp. 22-23.

[50] Ibid., p.23 See also Grant Brown, Burma As I Saw It (London 1926), p.201.

[51] Janell Ann Nilsson, The Administration of British Burma, 1852-1885 Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London 1970, p.15.

[52] Ibid., pp. 241-242.

[53] The reduction of the Thugyi's fiscal responsibilities was achieved by inducing the people to accept long-term land revenue settlements in place of annual land revenue assessments conducted under the auspices of the Thugyi, ibid., p.242.

was enlarged so that each Thugyi collected over Rs. 6,000 a year. Thus the total revenue paid to Thugyi by commission was considerably reduced, as commission on collections over Rs. 6,000 was only 5%, compared with the 10% on collections below that amount.[54]

Thus the Thugyi was given a larger jurisdictim but no powers and financial advantages. Naturally he became reluctant to take any interest in the affairs of his circle. Frequently he had assistants for the collection of revenue, so that often he knew nothing or, perhaps, did not bother to know anything of his assistants' activities in the circle.[55] Even if he wanted to take any interest in the affairs of his circle, he had,in fact, little or no time to do so. As more and more emphasis was given on the correct performance of his revenue duties, and as his revenue work was greatly increased because of the enlargement of his circle, he spent more time on paper work and less in his circle.[56]

This decline in influence and knowledge of their circles by Thugyis was being widely deplored by the more senior members of the commission. Thus the Commissioner of the Pegu Division wrote in his letter to the Chief Commissioner, dated 25 June 1883:

> "there is a great difference in the class of men now appointed as thoogyees. Formerly a thoogyee was generally selected from amongst those in a circle who had some influence and were respected; but now the chief point looked to is qualification in surveying; and it is almost impossible to get men who have

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[54] Nilsson, op.cit., p.242.

[55] Ibid., p.245.

[56] Ibid.

influence and are at the same time qualified."[57]

Crosthwaite, then Officiating Chief Commissioner of British Burma in 1883-1884, observed:

> "In British Burma the tendency, arising naturally from our system of dividing labour, is to dissociate them /Thugyis/ from all duties except those of a purely revenue nature. This tendency must be checked."[58]

So after becoming Chief Commissioner of the re-united Burma in 1887 Crosthwaite's anxiety was to prevent a similar result in Upper Burma.

Crosthwaite's scheme was based on the information which he was able to collect at that time from the Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioners in Upper Burma regarding the old system of village administration. This information was, however, fragmentary as the Deputy Commissioners could not freely move about their districts which still remained out of their control.[59] A brief account of this information is necessary to understand Crosthwaite's scheme properly.

From the Reports and Memoranda of the Deputy Commissioners and Commissioners it appears that there was a great deal of diversity of practice in different districts. But, except in villages occupied by ahmudans[60] where officials were named according to their regiments, the general pattern of the system was that each village had a recognised headman. This headman was known by different names in different

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[57] BHP, vol. 1987, August 1883 (Police), p.55.

[58] Ibid., September 1883 (Police), p.26.

[59] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), pp. 845-897, Reports and Memoranda by Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners.

[60] The Burmese people were divided into two main groups: the ahmudans and the athi. The ahmudans comprised all those classes of people who were liable to a regular service in some public capacity. The athi comprised people who paid taxes but were not liable for regular service. They might, however, be recruited on occasions of emergency for service in the army. The ahmudan group was again divided into two classes: those liable for military service and those liable to render personal service in some other form, J.S.Furnivall, An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma (Rangoon 1938), pp. 37-38.

parts of the country. In parts of the Bhamo district, for instance, he was known as Tamon, or Pawmaing.[61] In most places, however, he was known by the name of Thugyi. His post was often hereditary. His main duty was to collect the thathameda or house tax.[62] He managed this through the thamadi or thathameda-lugyi elected by the villagers.[63] He was also responsible for the peace and security of his village. He had certain police powers. He could enquire into cases of suspicious characters dwelling in his village, question every stranger passing by, and arrest the offenders. He could enforce the collective responsibility of villagers in matters of building a proper fence round the village and restoring dacoited cattle if the tracks of the perpetrators were traced to his village. He also exercised certain magisterial powers. He acted as an arbitrator and judge in civil disputes.

The Thugyi was assisted by other officials such as Seingaung, Ywasaye, Ywazaw and Hnozaw. The Seingaung acted as an assistant in police matters as well as in matters of collecting revenue and carrying out of orders of officials in his village. He received a small

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[61] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), p.883, Report from Deputy Commissioner, Bhamo.

[62] The Burmese Government adopted different average rates for different tracts as they recognised that all tracts in a district were not equally rich. Thus Salin town in the Minbu district, being the centre of an irrigated tract, was assessed at Rs. 12to Rs. 13 per household. Remote tracts adjoining uncultivated waste were assessed at Rs. 7 or even Rs. 6 per household. SR, Minbu, 1893-97(Rangoon 1900), p.50.

[63] Thamadi was an assessor of Thathameda revenue. Lugyi was a chief in any undertaking. So Thathamedalugyi was a chief who had the duty to collect Thathameda.

remuneration from the Thugyi and was exempted from payment of tax. He also received, perhaps not everywhere, small fees from married couples,known as gebo or price of stones. This fee was paid to him in order that he might protect the house of the newly married couple from being pelted with stones. The Ywasaye was the Thugyi's clerk. He took the statements and the evidence of the parties to a case and then brought the case before him. The Ywazaw was a peon used to carry summonses, orders etc. The Hnozaw was a messenger.

The Thugyi was usually remunerated by 10°/o of the thathameda collections. He was exempted from taxation, and held land, not everywhere, by virtue of his office. Sometimes he shared the Segyi's commission on land revenue.[64] He also got fees for deciding civil cases.

A higher system of organisation existed in many places, but not everywhere, under which the villages and their headmen were grouped under a superior headman, known, among other appellations, by the name of Myothugyi. The jurisdiction of this official was often large. Thus the Myothugyi of Metkaya had under him nearly one-third of the villages in the district. The average number of villages in a Myothugyi's circle in that district was, however, 37.8.[65]

The Myothugyi appears to have possessed considerable power and influence. He was responsible for the peace of his circle as

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[64] Segyi was the man in charge of the weirs and canals. He was a powerful official. He could with impunity kill any villagers who shirked working upon the weirs when called upon, SR, Kyaukse, 1890-91 (Rangoon 1892), p.7.

[65] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), p.876, Report from Deputy Commissioner, Kyaukse.

the Thugyi for his village. So his authority was more extended than that of the Thugyi in respect of civil and criminal matters. He was also assisted by several officials in his duties. There were Asiyin, Myodein, Myosaye and Myomagaung. The Asiyin assisted the Myothugyi in his duties and, in the absence of Myothugyi, acted by himself. The Myodein's duty was to go about the circle or elsewhere on public business on the Myothugyi's bidding. In some parts of the country, as in the Kubo Valley, the names Myothugyi and Myodein were synonymous.[66] The Myosaye wrote orders and reports for the Myothugyi. The Myomagaung took the place of the Thugyi in other villages. All these officers were remunerated by grants of land free of tax or rent, and by exemption from thathameda . The Myothugyi himself, besides 10% commission on his own personal collection, that is to say, on the collection of the town in which he resided, managed to get a percentage from Thugyis in his jurisdiction, received a large amount by way of fees, and held land.[67]

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[66] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), p.897.

[67] Lands which were held by Thugyis and Myothugyis were called thugyisia lands. It is not possible to say how much land was held by the headmen, because the treasury records were destroyed when Mandalay was taken, SR, Kyaukse, 1890-91, p.21. According to Shway Yoe (Sir J.G.Scott), such lands were not very numerous or extensive, The Burman: His Life and Notions (London1882), p.272. But from other available sources it appears that they were quite numerous. Thus in the Minbu district about 7,000 acres of thugyisia lands were found in the possession of various headmen, while in the Myingyan district such lands were found everywhere, SR, Minbu, 1893-97, p.70; SR, Myingyan, 1899-1901 (Rangoon 1901), p.27. In fact, the headmen were in the habit of claiming all unoccupie land in their circles, BEAP, vol. 3582A, October 1888 (Rev.&Ag.Dept.), p.26, Financial Commissioner's Revenue Department Circular No. 11 of 1888.

Such was the information which Sir Charles Crosthwaite was able to collect at the time of preparing his final draft of the Village Regulation. Though fragmentary, it appears to have been adequate so far as his proposed scheme was concerned. The existence of a self-supporting village community with a responsible headman was undoubtedly a favourable situation for his scheme. Moreover, the hereditary nature of the Thugyi's office was likely to help Crosthwaite in executing his plan. For generations succession passed from one member of the family to another. So the Thugyi seems to have had a strong sentimental attachment to the office. The following extract from the Sittan or statement submitted by the Thugyi of the Hlesatun village of the Myingyan district in 1783 is worth noting:

> "My great grandfather Nga Po Nyi ruled Hlesatun village. When he was no more, my grandfather Nga Hpo U ruled. When he was no more, my father Nga Hpo Hla ruled. When he was no more, I have ruled from the year 1118 /1756/ until now."[68]

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68 Sittans collected by Furnivall, in possession of Professor Frank N. Trager. It should be noted that succession was not strictly by primogeniture. A brother or a son-in-law might succeed to the office if there were no sons or if the sons were incapable either owing to age or to some deficiency. Thus, the Thugyi of the Kyaung-nan village was succeeded by his brother as his son was young, while the Thugyi of the Gwegyo village having no male offspring, the charge was given to his son-in-law in the presence of the Myothugyi, ibid. There are also instances of women Ywathugyis in the Sittans. Thus, the villages of Ywama, Saku, Kagwe, and Kyabei in the Pagan district were ruled by headwomen. Occasionally husband and wife ruled a village jointly as in the case of the Nga Hlaing village, "Pagan Myo Sittan", JBRS, vol. 33, 1950, Part 1, pp. 47-48 and Part II, pp. 253, 258-259.

Every available Sittan contains a brief account of the headman's ancestry. This practice of giving the ancestry seems to have grown out of the headman's anxiety to assert his ancestral position. In fact, the headman's attachment to the office was so strong that the idea of losing this traditional position was something which it was very hard for him to reconcile himself to.

Furthermore, the office itself was very lucrative. As we have seen from the reports of the Deputy Commissioners, the Thugyi enjoyed a commission of 10°/o on the thathameda collections, was himself exempted from taxation, held thugyisia land, and received judicial fees. The Sittans give us some additional information. They tell us that when owned cattle died in his jurisdiction the Thugyi took the ribs, hump, rump and neck and that when ownerless cattle died he took them all.[69]

Thus, both for sentimental and financial reasons, the new headman, if selected from amongst the hereditary Thugyis, was likely to be an effective agent of the new village system. In his anxiety to save his traditional position he would not only be loyal to the Government, he would also try to serve honestly and efficiently. Under the circumstances, it would be easier for the authorities to make every single village through its headman responsible for everything that happened within the village tract. There was, moreover, a custom in Burmese society according to which a village into which the traces of stolen cattle led was bound either to produce the goods, to trace them to another village or the place in the jungle

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69 Sittans collected by Furnivall, in possession of Professor Trager.

where they were hidden, or to pay the value of them.[70] Most Deputy Commissioners spoke of the usefulness of this custom. Thus the District Officer of Yamethin wrote:

> "Time after time have people whose cattle have been dacoited appeared before me and stated they have tracked them to certain villages, and great has been their astonishment when I explained to them my utter helplessness to proceed under their old custom. In the present state of the country our law is not far reaching enough to deal with dacoity which is an established institution, and if we borrow a page from Burmese law and embody it with our own, a very powerful instrument for the detection and absolute suppression of dacoity will have been found."[71]

Crosthwaite was convinced that in the existing state of Burma it was necessary to give the Magistrate power to enforce the responsibility of villagers in cases where they harboured or aided 'dacoits or robbers', and in which stolen property was tracked to their village and they were unable to pass on the responsibility to some other village.[72]

But Crosthwaite's proposed scheme meant the breaking up of the existing larger circles under the Myothugyis. From the Reports of the Deputy Commissioners and Commissioners it appears that the Myothugyi was a very powerful official. The Sittans also give us a similar idea. Thus the Myothugyi of Talokmyo wrote in his Sittan of 1783:

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[70] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), pp. 845, 847-848, 855.

[71] Ibid., p.847, Report from District Officer, Yamethin, 14 February 1887.

[72] Ibid., p.839, Letter from Secretary to the Chief Commissioner to Government of India, 8 September 1887.

> "Criminal matters and cases regarding land or water are decided by me as Myothugyi. Matters involving service people and non-service people .... are cleared up by me. In the cavalry villages disputes regarding the service or revenue dues .... and criminal cases and lengthy civil cases are decided by me."[73]

Thus the Myothugyi possessed considerable power. Furthermore, his post being hereditary, he seems to have had an equally strong sentimental attachment to his traditional position. He knew how for generations his family had ruled the Myo. The Myothugyi of Talokmyo wrote in the same Sittan:

> "My great grandfather Nga Myat Htun ruled and had charge of Talokmyo with the position of Myothugyi. When he was no more, his son Nga Myat Ye succeeded and ruled and had charge. When he was no more, his son Nga San Yun succeeded and ruled and had charge. When he was no more, I, his son Nga Ne, succeeded to the appointment of my great grandfather, grandfather, and father and from 1127 [1765] until now have ruled and have charge with the position of Myothugyi."[74]

Thus it was not an easy job to do away with the institution of Myothugyi. There was, however, one thing which might help Crosthwaite to execute his plan. The Myothugyi's influence was usually confined within the town in which he resided. Beyond that, especially in distant villages under his jurisdiction, he had little influence. As we have seen,[75] his jurisdiction was often very large. It was practically impossible on his part to come into direct contact with the inhabitants of so many villages scattered over a considerable tract. As long as the situation was normal he had little

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[73] Sittans collected by Furnivall, in possession of Professor Trager.

[74] Ibid.

[75] See above, p.222.

or no problem. But in a bad situation, when there was no food and no security of life and property, his position was bound to be precarious. In such a situation the villagers usually clung to their immediate leader - the Thugyi - whom they knew well. This situation was undoubtedly favourable to Crosthwaite's proposed scheme.

Crosthwaite's draft regulation was approved by the Government of India in October 1887.[76] It was called the Upper Burma Village Regulation of 1887. It extended to the whole of Upper Burma except the Shan States.

The Regulation empowered the Deputy Commissioner to appoint a headman in every village or group of villages. It also laid down that in appointing a headman the Deputy Commissioner should have regard, so far as circumstances admitted, to any established custom which might exist respecting the right of nomination or succession, and that when in any village or group of villages there were two or more headmen, the Deputy Commissioner should decide which of them should be the headman for the purposes of the Regulation.[77]

The headman so appointed was given certain specific duties. He would give the authorities any information which he might collect regarding the presence of any notorious receiver or vendor of stolen property in his village, the movement of suspicious characters therein, and the commission of, or attempt or intention to, commit murder, dacoity and robbery.[78] He would take all possible precautionary measures to protect his village from any unlawful attack.

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[76] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), p.901.

[77] Ibid., Section 3, pp. 901-902.

[78] Ibid., Section 4, p.902.

He would, above all, co-operate with the authorities in supplying on payment food or carriage to the troops or police posted in or near or marching through the village, and in furnishing labourers for various public works.[79]

The headman was also given certain police and magisterial powers. He could search for and arrest any person whom he had reason to suspect.[80] He could try any person accused of assault, theft, mischief, criminal trespass, or any other offence which the local Government might declare to be triable by him, and sentence him to a fine of up to five rupees, or sometimes to imprisonment up to twenty-four hours, or to both. If he was specially empowered by the local Government to try the case he could impose a heavier sentence.[81] He could also requisition the service of any person residing in his village in connection with the execution of his public duties. If anybody refused or neglected to comply with the requisition he could fine him up to Rs. 5 or send him to prison for one day.[82]

If a headman neglected to perform any of the duties imposed upon him by the Regulation, or abused any of the powers conferred upon him thereby, he was liable to pay a fine not exceeding Rs. 50, or to be suspended from office for a period not exceeding six months,

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[79] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), Section 5, pp. 902-903.

[80] Ibid., p.902.

[81] Ibid., Section 6, pp. 903-904.

[82] Ibid., Section 8, p.904.

or to be dismissed from office.[83]

The Regulation empowered the Deputy Commissioner to impose fines on all or any residents of a village who aided a criminal, suppressed evidence in any criminal case, or failed to restore the stolen property tracked to their village.[84] The Deputy Commissioner could also remove a person from his village if that person was found in the habit of harbouring, aiding or abetting the criminals.[85]

Such were the main features of Crosthwaite's Village Regulation. The immediate effect of the Regulation was to bring Upper Burma under a uniform system of administration. But this could not be done without disturbing the organic social life within the village. As the villages were now made merely units of administration, many considerations irrelevant to the life of the community entered into the formation of a village.[86] The new village might contain one or more hamlets within its borders, or its boundaries might cut with seeming irrelevance through the heart of some large residential unit.[87]

However, two things should be noted in connection with these changes. First, such changes, however unacceptable they might be to the Burmese people, were inevitable. One characteristic feature

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[83] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), Section 7, p.904.

[84] Ibid., Section 9, pp. 904-905.

[85] Ibid., Section 13, p.905.

[86] See below, pp.266-271.

[87] J.S.Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice (Cambridge 1948), p.74.

of British rule was the high concentration of authority at the centre.[88] This meant that sooner or later every part of the country would have to be brought under direct control of the central government through a chain of officials with the Chief Commissioner at the top and the village headman at the bottom.

Secondly, Crosthwaite's Village Regulation was not the first administrative measure which introduced such changes. Considerable changes had already been made both at township and village levels since the occupation of Mandalay. Meiktila and the township of Pakokku once formed part of Myingyan. But for administrative convenience Meiktila was constituted into a separate district with the addition of outlying parts of Myingyan and Pagan,[89] while Pakokku was transferred to Pagan.[90] The townships of Mahlaing and Pin once formed part of Pagan. But later on Mahlaing and the country to the east and south-east were made over to Meiktila, and Pin to Taungdwingyi,[91] which was taken from Minbu.[92] These changes, of course, involved larger units than villages. But so far as Burmese sentiment was concerned, there was practically no difference. This is why Sir Charles Bernard administered a note of caution:

> "It should be the general rule, from which departure should be avoided as far as possible, that the recognised limits of townships (myos) and circles (taiks)

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[88] Furnivall, The Governance of Modern Burma (New York 1958), p.6.

[89] ARB, 1885-1886, Part IV, p.17.

[90] Ibid., p.13.

[91] Ibid., p.14.

[92] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

should be maintained, and that a township or a circle should not be placed partly in one district and partly in another."[93]

To make a Regulation was one thing, to enforce it effectually was another. The success of Crosthwaite's Village Regulation depended on several things, namely, a strong force of military police, adequate civilian officers, and disarmament of the population.

As to the first, Crosthwaite was convinced that without a strong force of military police it would not be possible to enforce the Regulation effectually.[94] The sanctioned strength of Indian police at Crosthwaite's take over was 12,386 officers and men and that of Burmese police 5,000 men. But a considerable portion of this force was yet to take the field. To meet the immediate requirement it was decided to raise 2,000 police by inviting volunteers from native regiments serving in Burma. But the scheme did not work well at first. The service did not seem to be attractive to the Indian sepoys. The life of the military police in Upper Burma, the isolated posts they were to hold, the jungle life they were obliged to lead, and the peculiar nature of their duties, did not commend the situation to them.[95] Furthermore, there was a good deal of anomaly as to the question of full pay to the military police while on furlough and sick leave. Some were given full pay, while others only half pay.[96] The Mandalay authorities were, however, in

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[93] Cmd. 4962, 1887, Further Correspondence in continuation of 4887, p.115, Instructions to Civil Officers, 19 March 1886, Parliamentary Papers.

[94] Crosthwaite, op. cit., p.82.

[95] The Pioneer Mail, 2 February 1887, p.133; The Rangoon Times, 1 April 1887, p.604 and The Army and Navy Gazette (London), vol. XXVII, 9 January 1887, p.21.

[96] IUBP, vol. 3203, January 1888 (Police), pp. 17-18.

favour of full pay to all, as these men were taken on the general condition that furlough and sick leave would be granted as in the native army.[97] But the Viceroy interpreted this condition in a different way. He wrote that as the pay in the native army was ordinarily Rs. 7 the police would draw this instead of Burma pay which was Rs. 14.[98] In fact, very few volunteers came forward.[99] Eventually the Viceroy agreed to allow them full Burma pay.[100]

The new police who arrived during 1887 had little or no training at all. They were mostly village lads hastily recruited.[101] They were hurried into posts before they received sufficient drill and training in musketry.[102] However, efforts were made to make the police organisation as complete as possible. A senior military officer was appointed to be the Inspector General of Police,[103] while another official was appointed to supervise the supply of food and clothing to the military police.[104] Arrangements were made for the provision of medical aid to the civil establishments, and more particularly to the force of military police.[105]

The military police were distributed in battalions, one for each district. They were commanded by English officers. There was

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[97] IUBP, vol. 3203, January 1888 (Police), pp. 14-15.

[98] Ibid., p.14.

[99] Ibid., vol. 2967, September 1887 (Police), p.261. See also The Pioneer Mail, 2 March 1887, p.24.

[100] IUBP, vol. 3203, January 1888 (Police), p.26.

[101] The Times of India, 7 February 1887, p.4.

[102] GSWP, vol. 3, Demi-official to Chief, 31 May 1887.

[103] IUBP, vol. 2967, August 1887 (Police), p.249.

[104] Ibid, June 1887 (Police), p.227.

[105] Ibid., p.223.

one Commandant per battalion with a second-in-command for each except the four smaller battalions of Meiktila, Ruby Mines, Kyaukse, and Ye-U.[106] Each battalion was distributed among a number of outposts, sufficient strength being retained at headquarters to provide a reserve for emergencies and to supply a moveable column for constant active service. There was a tendency on the part of most District Officers to press for the occupation of a large number of posts.[107] The effect of the establishment of a police post was usually the settlement of the country in the immediate neighbourhood. But it was impossible to put a police post in every important village, and the result of the establishment of an unduly large number of posts was that a considerable proportion of the force was rendered useless for active operations, being required for the permanent protection of the posts. So the tendency to establish a large number of posts was checked. The formation of new posts was permitted only with the sanction of the Chief Commissioner. Orders were also issued fixing the minimum number of the garrison of a post at forty men, and directing that in disturbed parts of the country patrols should always consist of not less than ten men.[108]

The sanctioned strength of the Indian police at the beginning of 1888 was 17,515 of all ranks and the actual strength 13,244.[109] The total number of posts held by them about this time was 175.[110]

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[106] RPAB, 1888 (Rangoon 1889), p.23.

[107] Ibid., p.9. See Extract from the Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner, Burma, Judicial Department, No. 567 P, 5 August 1889.

[108] Ibid., 1888, p.9.

[109] Ibid., p.20.

[110] Ibid., p.23.

The sanctioned strength of the Burmese police was 6,127 of all ranks.[111] This however did not include the Karen levy which was raised during 1887.[112] The latter's strength at the beginning of 1888 was only 116 men.[113] They were put on a similar footing to the Indian police, and equipped and clothed in a manner similar to the Gurkha police.[114] So like the Indian police their role was one of quasi-military nature. Indeed, they proved themselves to be a very effective force, especially in the hilly tract. The local police, other than the Karens, were mostly employed for detection and intelligence which was essential for enabling the district authorities to get a firm grip of their districts.[115] Many of them, however, took part in military operations, and were allowed to carry firearms. But they could not be trusted with guns for long. The Rangoon Press strongly condemned the practice and reported some cases of desertion by the Burmese police with their guns and ammunition.[116]

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[111] RPAB, 1888, p.54.

[112] The case of the Karens as a useful force was first advocated by Dr. Vinton, their missionary leader. The first British officer who did the same thing was D.M.Smeaton of Bengal Service who was intimately connected with the pacification of Upper Burma. Smeaton's book, entitled The Loyal Karens of Burma, published in 1887, did much to mould the official attitude in favour of the Karens. See The Times of India, 29 January 1887, p.4, and The Rangoon Times, 10 October 1887, p.673 and 22 October 1887, p.719.

[113] RPAB, 1888, p.28.

[114] Ibid., pp. 27-28.

[115] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.34.

[116] The Rangoon Times, 16 April 1887, p.700; The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 29 April 1887, p.2.

These cases are not, however, supported by the official papers. But one thing is clear, that Crosthwaite himself did not trust the Burmese police.[117] The Burmese police had been allowed to carry guns by Bernard. Now Crosthwaite discontinued the practice and called in those already issued.[118] The local police were not, however, neglected. Every effort was made to improve their standard.

Simultaneously with the organisation of military and civil police the number of civil officers was also increased. As we know, right from the beginning, the civil administration in Upper Burma was faced with the practical difficulty of getting suitable officers. The shortage of officers had forced Bernard to refuse furlough and privilege leave to all officers save on medical certificate.[119] The problem might have been partially solved if suitable officers of the old regime were available for service. Bernard had always been most anxious to employ suitable Burmans, but he had been able to procure very few so far.[120] The problem was really acute. The Commissioners were asking for more Assistants.[121] One Commissioner alone had asked for ten additional European Assistant Commissioners.[122]

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[117] MLEI, vol. 977, M 1266/1888, p.20, Crosthwaite's Note on the Reduction of the Garrison in Burma, 30 August 1887, Confidential; Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.53.

[118] IUBP, vol. 2967, October 1887 (Police), p.327.

[119] Ibid., vol. Z/P/2035, March 1887 (Establishment), p. 40.

[120] Ibid., p.41.

[121] Ibid., p.40.

[122] Ibid., p.37.

It appears that by the end of 1886 Bernard needed 99 officers in all. But, considering the difficulty of procuring suitable men, he was ready to fix the cadre or number of charges at ninety-three on the assumption that six of the posts might be held by Eurasians.[123] This, however, did not give him any allowance for absentees on leave and men in training. So in February 1887 he proposed an additional thirty-seven men over the cadre in view of absentees on leave and men in training, fixing the total strength of the Commission at 130 in all.[124] He insisted that the Commission should be brought up to full strength at once. He was sure that nearly all the transferred civil servants would try to get back to their provinces of origin at the end of the five years' term, as they found Upper Burma trying and expensive.[125] Before any decision was taken regarding Bernard's proposal, Crosthwaite took over and in April he proposed to put the number of regular charges at 100 instead of ninety-three, and allowing 38% for men in training and on leave, fixed the normal strength of the Commission at 138.[126] But the Government of India raised objections to this on technical grounds. The number of superior appointments in the united provinces was fifty-three. The standard condition of the service was that in the tenth year of service a man should be obtaining a practically continuous officiating superior appointment. If the superior appointments were limited to

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[123] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, March 1887 (Est.), p.46.

[124] Ibid., vol. 2967, November 1887 (Est.)b p.132.

[125] Ibid., p.133. See also GSWP, vol. 4, General White's demi-official to General Chapman, Adjutant-General, dated 11 October 1887.

[126] Ibid., p.142.

fifty-three, it would be impossible in a service of a strength greater than 110 for a man to attain permanently to an acting appointment in the superior grade in the tenth year of service.[127] But Crosthwaite argued very strongly in favour of his proposal. He wrote that the sub-divisions in Burma, which were very often heavy and anxious charges, required men of activity and capacity, and that the closure of furlough could not be maintained any longer.[128] However, eventually he agreed that the gross strength of the Commission should be fixed at 114, and that twenty-four new Extra Assistant Commissioners should be created for Burma.[129] The Extra Assistant Commissioners were sanctioned by the Secretary of State by the end of November on condition that they should be as far as possible natives of Burma.[130]

Last, and not least, the question of disarming the population was seriously taken up, because the Village Regulation would mean nothing if under the present situation the people were left in possession of firearms. As we have seen,[131] efforts had been made since the occupation of Mandalay towards disarmament, but without much success. The official papers show that during 1886 a considerable quantity of firearms and ammunition was collected from time to time.

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[127] IUBP, vol. 2967, November 1887 (Est.), p.146.

[128] Ibid., p.148.

[129] Ibid., pp. 148-149.

[130] Ibid., December 1887 (Est.), p.156.

[131] See above, pp.46, 97.

But in spite of that the rebels and dacoits never ran short of these. Perhaps the most feasible explanation for this is to be found in the practice of illicit trade in arms and ammunition existing in the country for some time past. Dr. Vinton, the missionary leader of the Karens, had pointed out how rifles and ammunition were smuggled overland from Siam. The best American rifles were sold at a cheap price, while boxes of five hundred military caps, sold in Rangoon for Rs. 5, only cost half a rupee in Toungoo.[132] Vinton's information, which was not taken seriously by the authorities, was confirmed by the Bangkok British Consul's trade report to Lord Salisbury for 1886, published by the end of 1887. According to the Bangkok Customs Returns there were 59,200 muskets imported into Bangkok in 1886 as compared with 9,280 in 1885.[133] A large proportion of these muskets found their way into the hands of the rebels and dacoits of Burma. Siam was not, however, the only country through which arms and ammunition were available. They also used to come from China to Bhamo. Chinese made Sniders cost Rs. 35 each in Bhamo.[134]

Furthermore, a certain quantity of arms and ammunition might also get into Upper Burma through some dishonest British merchants of Rangoon. In 1885 there were seventy-three licensed dealers in Rangoon.[135] At least one of them was found to be engaged in illegal dealing with Upper Burma immediately before the occupation of

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[132] Smeaton, op.cit., p.43; Vinton's letter, 17 August 1886.

[133] The Rangoon Times, 10 November 1887, p.788.

[134] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.11, Note on the Bhamo district by the Chief Commissioner, 19 August 1886.

[135] PGLIB, vol. 86, p.546.

Mandalay.[136] In 1886 the number of licensed vendors was reduced to fifty-five and in 1887 to eighteen.[137] In fact, the temptation for making fortunes under the situation was very great, and the Government should have totally stopped arms trade for a while, especially when there was a case on record.

Smuggling through Siam or China could not, however, be completely stopped even if the main inland trade routes were guarded. The borders were so extensive that the smugglers might always find a convenient route. The only possible way to deal with the situation effectually was to deal with the population directly. This again depended on the amount of man-power the Government had at its disposal. Evidently Bernard did not have the advantage of man-power. But Crosthwaite's position was better. He had a vast body of army and police at his disposal. Furthermore, the hold of the British over the country had also considerably advanced. Major-General White, speaking of disarmament, wrote to Sir Frederick Roberts in October 1887:

> "Formerly when lawlessness was the rule & not the exception, it seemed cruel to deprive any village community of the means of defending itself ..... but our hold over the country has advanced in such a very marked degree that the time has come to make the people depend upon us & give us ..... information."[138]

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[136] Messrs. Edmund Jones and Co. of Rangoon, a firm of British merchants and contractors, was charged for smuggling caps and cartridges into Upper Burma in biscuit boxes. Some 200 boxes with the labels of this firm were recovered from the King's arsenal after the occupation of Mandalay. See HC, vol.97 , p.105. Apart from this case, which is on official record, The Times of India dated 17 January 1887, reported a similar case in which a British shopkeeper in Mandalay was deprived of his license on the ground that he was freely using it on the quiet to supply the rebels with bullets.

[137] PGLIB, vol. 86, p.546.

[138] GWSP, vol. 4, demi-official to Frederick Roberts, 11 October 1887.

So Crosthwaite proposed to take up the question of disarmament for both Lower Burma and Upper Burma together. In other words, he wanted to introduce a uniform system in Burma as a whole. He had two courses open to him. First, licenses might be freely issued, and loyal and trustworthy persons might be encouraged to arm themselves for the purpose of self-protection, subject to the condition that firearms were not possessed by people who lived in isolated places without the support of others similarly armed. Secondly, the country might be completely disarmed, and only the police and superior Government officers and Europeans allowed to carry firearms.[139] The danger of the former course was that the firearms might, as they did, constantly fall into the hands of rebels and dacoits. The objection to the second course was that as the Government could not afford complete protection to all outlying villages the result of a measure of complete disarmament would be that loyal people would be deprived of their weapons, while outlaws would continue to possess theirs.[140]

Crosthwaite was, however, in favour of the second course in view of the improved situation.[141] But he consulted commissioners and other high military and civil officers on this subject. The weight of opinion was much in favour of the policy of complete disarmament, but it was felt that there must be certain definite exceptions

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[139] PGLIB, vol. 86, 1888, p.541, letter from Sec. to Chief Commissioner to Commissioners and Inspectors General of Police, 6 October 1887.

[140] Ibid., pp. 541-542.

[141] Ibid., p.542.

to the general rule. The exceptions were, broadly speaking, in regard to the loyal Thugyis and other honest persons, people who lived in villages within the close proximity of the Shans, Kachins and Chins, and people who lived in jungle tracts.[142]

Crosthwaite's measure of complete disarmament with certain exceptions was approved by the Governor-General in Council in exercise of the power conferred by section 17 of the Indian Arms Act, XI of 1878.[143]

While the machinery of civil administration was being steadily built up, the question of a reduction in the number of troops was simultaneously considered. On 1 April 1887 the force consisted of 20,971 men.[144] This was re-divided into four brigades. Of the six brigades which had existed during the winter months, the 1st and 3rd remained intact; the 2nd and 5th, amalgamated, formed the new 2nd and the 4th and 6th, amalgamated, formed the new 4th. The headquarters of these four new brigades were placed at points within easy communication with each other by road and water, namely, 1st at Mandalay, 2nd at Shwebo, 3rd at Meiktila and 4th at Myingyan. The troops were concentrated at strategical points round the headquarters of their respective brigades, whence flying columns could be sent in any required direction. In addition to the four brigades, independent commands were established at Bhamo and Chindwin.

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[142] PGLIB, vol. 86, pp. 555-586.

[143] Ibid., pp. 601-604.

[144] Frontier and Overseas Expeditions (Simla 1907), vol. V, p.290.

The re-division of troops into four new brigades undoubtedly saved quite a good amount of money. But the Government of India were not satisfied. They pressed for a heavy reduction of force.[145] They thought that, as the last winter operations had produced certain good results, the civil authorities, backed by a large force of military and civil police, would now be in a position to play a major role in quieting the country. But General White, commanding the Field Force, was opposed to this idea of heavy reduction. He wired the Quarter-Master General on 6 July:

> "To send many troops away now would involve much movement and consequent exposure in the rains; also at this season it is impossible to veil the withdrawal of the troops by increased movement of those remaining. I therefore advise withdrawal be postponed. During open season, columns should be paraded through Shan States, Wuntho, and to the extreme west of Yaw country; there are also districts that require more dominating, notably Toung-Dwindgyi. It would be difficult to arrange these if there was a heavy reduction of force now; besides, retention of force admits of allowing police recruits more time at battalion head-quarters, a precaution that will be very valuable to Burma hereafter."[146]

Crosthwaite supported White.[147] In fact, White's arguments were based on the practical consideration of the situation. But the Indian Government stuck to its policy of immediate reduction. The Secretary to the Government of India wrote to the Quarter-Master General that, as 4,000 additional police would be ready by

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[145] MLEI, vol. 977, M 1266/1888, p.1. Tels. from Offg. Sec. to the Govt. of India, Mil. Dept., to Quarter-Master General, 23 June 1887, and to Chief Commissioner, 30 June 1887.

[146] Ibid., p.2, White's tel. 6 July 1887. See also GSWP, vol. 4, demi-officials to Crosthwaite, 6 July 1887; to Chesney, 9 July 1887; to Crosthwaite, 13 July 1887, and to F.Roberts, 20 Aug 1887.

[147] Ibid., Crosthwaite's Telegram to Sec. to Indian Govt., 13 July 1887.

November, a larger reduction would not affect the garrison in Upper Burma.[148] On the other hand, he pointed out in a subsequent letter, this would result in a considerable reduction of the very heavy expenditure which was now being incurred, a result which was much to be desired in the present state of the finances.[149] But the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Roberts, considering the need of a strong garrison in Upper Burma during the next cold weather, could not recommend any larger reduction immediately.[150] Eventually, after a good deal of correspondence, it was decided that larger reduction should be effected at the end of the cold season. Some units would, however, be withdrawn from Upper Burma by December 1887 but this would not affect the garrison as those units would be simultaneously replaced by fresh troops from India.[151]

The insistence of the Government of India on the question of reduction tends to suggest that they could not fully realise the gravity of the situation. Their impression was that the situation was completely under control, otherwise they would not have asked so much of the military police. Of course, the military police were beginning to play a major role in the work of pacification. They now engaged the rebels and dacoits more frequently than before. They were also taking over posts from the troops rapidly. This is proved by the fact that on 1 May 1887 the troops were holding 141

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[148] MLEI vol. 977, M 1266, Letter from Sec. to Indian Govt. to Quarter-Master Gen., 23 July 1887.

[149] Ibid., p.3, Letter from Sec. to Indian Government, 22 August 1887.

[150] Ibid., p.4, Letter from Quarter-Master Gen. to Sec. to Indian Government, 27 August 1887.

[151] Ibid., pp. 5-20.

posts, but on 1 June there were but 113 military posts.[152] But this did not mean that the police could cope with the situation alone. In fact, they would have to depend on the soldiers for many months to come. Major-General White realised this. This is why he was so strongly opposed to the idea of reduction. He knew that it would be necessary for some time to be watchful and to have an adequate force at hand.[153] His argument as to the immediate effect of the reduction seems to have been quite reasonable. A larger reduction was sure to embolden the insurgents. White's view seems to have been shared by some of the leading newspapers. The Pioneer Mail reported: "The dacoit leaders still at large may seek to stimulate their followers by declaring that the garrison is about to be largely reduced."[154] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget reported: "The knowledge that many of the troops are leaving the country has emboldened the dacoits..."[155] But the Indian Government seem to have ignored this aspect. They were anxious to make some sort of declaration to the effect that active operations in Upper Burma were at an end.[156]

The soundness of General White's judgement was proved by the renewed rebel activity during the rainy season of 1887. This time the rebels appear to have been more desperate than ever. On many occasions they displayed a good deal of initiative. Previously

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[152] GSWP, vol. 3, demi-official to General Roberts, 11 June 1887.

[153] Ibid., vol. 4, to Chesney, 9 July 1887. See also The Pioneer Mail, 9 March 1887, p.278.

[154] The Pioneer Mail, 9 March 1887, p.278.

[155] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 25 March 1887, p.2.

[156] GSWP, vols. 6-8, Chesney to White, 8 February 1888.

in most cases, they were forced to give battle. But now they themselves took the offensive. The following extracts from the Field Journal for May 1887 would illustrate this point:

> "Pounghlin, which was held by one Company of the 3rd Infantry, Hyderabad Contingent, under Lieutenant Frazer, was attacked in a determined manner by 150 dacoits..."[157]

> "Kyabin was attacked by 150 men, and Mau surrounded by 100, and 2 Burman Scouts were killed."[158]

> "Sidotia was again attacked on the 2nd instant and again to-day [4th]; this time by a large number of dacoits."[159]

The Field Journals from May onwards mention numerous such cases of rebel offensives. These do not, however, necessarily mean that the rebels grew more powerful than ever. In fact, there is no reason to believe that, because during the last eighteen months the rebels had been constantly under pressure from the troops and police. These desperate rebel attacks should perhaps be examined in the light of the rapidly deteriorating economic condition. The last eighteen months' continuous fighting had utterly destroyed the means of living. Trade was ruined and agriculture neglected in spite of fair seasons.[160] The people in many cases abandoned their villages and land. Naturally much land remained unsown.[161] But in most cases they used seed paddy for food.[162] Their hard lot

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[157] MLEI, vol. 972, M 9390/1887.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Ibid.

[160] SR, Myingyan, 1899-1901 (Rangoon 1901), p.11; SR, Meiktila, 1896-98 (Rangoon 1900), p.53.

[161] The Times, 9 June 1887, p.5.

[162] BPWP, vol. 2885, p.1, Index No. 1, January 1887; MLEI, vol. 974, Field Journal for July 1887, p.1.

became still harder as they lost most of their cattle during the disturbances, some dying of disease and some being carried off by the dacoits.[163]

Throughout 1887 a considerable deficiency of food supplies was reported. Rice rose to an unprecedentedly high price, and there was a great scarcity of paddy throughout the greater part of Upper Burma, and especially through the Eastern division, and in part of the Shan States.[164] In many parts the people were reported to be living on grass, roots etc.[165] In the Sagaing district, for instance, the condition of the people was so serious that the Deputy Commissioner, A.R.Colquhoun, urged the Commissioner to authorise emergency relief work to give employment to the large number of unemployed people.[166]

The Government, however, tried to cope with the situation as earnestly as possible. During 1887 they imported 125,177 tons of rice from Lower Burma.[167] This was nearly double the quantity which was imported in each of the previous two years.[168] But this was far short of the actual requirement. The acute scarcity of rice led some Deputy Commissioners to purchase and import rice for sale in the open markets. But this practice was discouraged by the Chief

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[163] SR, Myingyan, p.13. It should be noted that in some parts of the country agriculture suffered because of the negligence of irrigation works during King Thibaw's reign, Burma Gazetteer: Yamethin District, vol. A, p.64; Burma Gazetteer: Kyaukse District, vol. A, pp. 46-47.

[164] HC, vol. 96 , p.1393; The Times, 9 June 1887, p.5: 21 July 1887, p.5: 29 July 1887, p.5: 4 August 1887, p.5: 28 November 1887, p.6.

[165] BPWP, vol. 2885, p.1, January 1887; IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), p.77; The Times, 28 November 1887, p.6.

[166] BPWP, vol. 2885, p.1, January 1887, Colquhoun's letter to the Commissioner, Central Division, 14 January 1887.

[167] ARB, 1886-1887 (Rangoon 1888), p.26.

[168] Ibid.

Commissioner as it might have the effect of stopping private trade altogether and of paralysing all local enterprise.[169]

In Mandalay, however, especially in the city, the situation appears to have been altogether different. Here rice was in fairly large stocks; beef and vegetables were plentiful and cheap and various types of fruits were available at fancy prices. Other items such as fowls, mutton, eggs, butter and milk, although scarce, were also available.[170] Thus the people living in the city and its immediate neighbourhood had little or no difficulty at all. This difference was not, however, unnatural. Mandalay was full of British officials, businessmen, and observers. So every effort was made to keep up the supplies of the necessities of day-to-day consumption. Furthermore, a large quantity of food-stuff was regularly pouring into Mandalay from the Shan States. The Mandalay municipal returns show that,in 1887-88, 13,300 pack bullocks with goods valued at Rs. 4,56,518 came in from the Shan States by the Hsipaw route.[171] Only Mandalay with its immediate neighbourhood was benefitted by these goods. They could not be sent to the distant parts of the country, as the roads were insecure and as the means of carriage, of all kinds, were requisitioned for military transport.[172]

Thus in 1887 the economic situation over the greater part of Upper Burma was utterly deplorable. The scarcity of food pushed

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169 BRAP vol. 3582A, October 1888 (Revenue and Agriculture), Financial Commissioner's Revenue Dept. Circular No. 15 of 1888.

170 The Rangoon Times, 19 November 1887, p.817.

171 Burma Gazetteer: Mandalay District, vol. A, p.163.

172 The Times, 9 June 1887, p.5.

thousands of people on to the point of starvation. Consequently, labour was very cheap. Men, women and children could be hired at four, three or two annas a day.[173] People were in desperate need of a job, whatever may have been the wages. If they did not find one, the only course open to them was to join the bands of insurgents or dacoits. Under the circumstances, it seems most likely that dacoity increased throughout Upper Burma.[174] But at the same time people grew more anti-British than ever, because they blamed the latter for their misfortune. Laurie made an important observation: "It is... impossible not to notice the fact that the succession of dry years since 1887 is more or less associated with and attributed to the entrance of a non-Buddhist power."[175] They also grew more hostile to those who collaborated with this non-Buddhist Power, and their attacks upon them were more frequent than ever.[176]

The situation explained above goes a long way to show that the task of the soldier was still far from being ended. While the machinery of civil administration was being organised, the troops were doing their own job. The military police co-operated with them, where necessary. A brief account of the military operations against some of the formidable bos is perhaps necessary to understand the course of the pacification properly.

As we have seen, Bo Shwe was scotched, not killed. During July and August 1887 he appears to have been active in his old tract

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[173] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 14 January 1887, p.2. One rupee = sixteen annas.

[174] The Times, 4 August 1887, p.5.

[175] SR, Mandalay 1892-93 (Rangoon 1894), Chapter IV, p.28.

[176] MLEI, vol. 972, M 9390/1887, p.2; vol. 973, M 10260/1887, p.1, Narrative of Events: week ending 13 August 1887: M 10720/1887, p.2, week ending 27 August: M 10721/1887, pp. 1, 3, 5-7, Field Journal for June 1887; vol. 974, Field Journal for July 1887, pp. 1-2,6, Vide No.210 of November 1887.

from Sidoktaya in the north to Mindon to the south close to the old frontier.[177] Of course, he was no longer master of his tract. His activity now was more of a flying nature. His position seems to have been improved a little because of the reconciliation with Thatto. The latter, as we know, had quarrelled with Bo Shwe and wished to give himself up to the British. But he did not come in. He was again found working with Bo Shwe.[178] He was now commanding a large following.[179]

But Bo Shwe never regained his former position. He was, in the words of Crosthwaite, a fugitive with a diminished following.[180] Early in October he was reported to be entrenched in the hills nine miles north-west of Milangon, with only 200 men. Major Harvey with a force of Mounted Infantry belonging to the Lower Burma command made a forced march of fifty miles and attacked Bo Shwe's camp in the hills. After a hard fight Bo Shwe and ten of his men were killed and many wounded.[181]

With Bo Shwe's death ended the story of the most formidable of all the partisan leaders who took the field after the capture of Mandalay.[182] Perhaps no other bo caused so much trouble and anxiety to the British as Bo Shwe did. This is why the Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget regarded the news of his death as the best news that had reached Rangoon from Upper Burma for some time past.[183] This is why the

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[177] MLEI, vol. 972, M 9759/1887, p.1; vol. 973, M 10721/1887, p.4, Field Journal for June 1887.

[178] Ibid., vol. 973, M 10721/1887, p.4, Field Journal for June.

[179] Ibid., vol. 974, Narrative of Events: week ending 10 September 1887, p.10, Vide No. 210 of November 1887.

[180] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.82.

[181] MLEI, vol. 978, M 3071/1888, p.2. See also Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.82.

[182] The Times, 17 October 1887, p.5.

[183] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 14 October 1887, p.5.

Rangoon Times hoped that disturbances near the old frontier would now cease.[184]

> "Bo Shuay", the paper continued, "was one of the ablest and most determined of those who have been in arms against us. He seems to have had considerable influence with his followers, for though constantly defeated, he always managed to number his forces again, reoccupying many places which we evacuated."[185]

General White admitted in a letter to Sir Frederick Roberts that Bo Shwe's death was a most important success and that no other leader could now attain to the influence exercised by Bo Shwe.[186]

Indeed, the moral impact of Bo Shwe's death upon the British and the insurgents alike was tremendous. To the insurgents, it made it quite clear that even the most powerful of their boys was bound to fall ultimately before a superior enemy. So its demoralising effect upon them seems to have been quite considerable. To the British, it indicated the sign of the coming end of a very weary struggle with a system of resistance which was costing them many good men and a lavish expenditure of money.[187]

After Bo Shwe's death most of his followers were reported to have rallied to Ôktama.[188] This must have strengthened the latter's position considerably.[189] During the rainy season and through the winter he had been constantly hunted down by the Karen police led by their Commander, A.D.Kiernander.[190] Simultaneously, military

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[184] The Rangoon Times, 11 October 1887, p.677.

[185] Ibid.

[186] GSWP, vol. 4, Letter to F. Roberts, 11 October 1887.

[187] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.82.

[188] The Times, 5 December 1887, p.5.

[189] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.83.

[190] RPAB, 1889 (Rangoon 1890), Part III, pp. 35-36; MLEI, vol. 978, M 3719, p.2: vol. 979, M 3954/1888, p.2, Narrative of Events: Week ending 18 February 1887.

operations were undertaken.[191] But his power was yet to be broken.

Apart from Ôktama's tract, the British were also specially concerned about the Lower Chindwin area. As we know, the most formidable leader of resistance in that area was the Shwègyobyu Prince. His principal area of activity was the Yaw country. During the last cold season operations some authority was established around Pagyi, Pakangyi and Pauk. Ever since two men, Maung Po and Maung Tha Gyi, were maintaining order in the tract on behalf of the British.[192] It was really a difficult country - a country of hills and ravines, densely wooded and also very unhealthy.[193] The British established their hold over the Pauk-Pakangyi tract with great difficulty. So they did not want to see this hold lost. Besides, if their power there was overthrown the result would be rebellion right away to the Chindwin.[194] So in April Captain Golightly was sent down to Pauk with a force of Mounted Infantry. But in spite of that precaution, throughout the rainy season the Yaw country as a whole was much disturbed.[195] Pauk itself was threatened by the followers of the Shwègyobyu Prince.[196] Maung Thagyi threw off his allegiance to the British, collected men and fortified a position near his village on the spurs of the Pondaung range, north-west of Pagyi.[197] He was

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[191] MLEI, vol. 978, M 3719, p.2.

[192] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.85.

[193] Ibid., pp. 84-85. See also The Times, 2 September 1887, p.3.

[194] GSWP, vol. 3, to Gen. Low, 17 April 1887, demi-official.

[195] MLEI, vol. 972, M 10260/1887, p.1; The Times, 2 September 1887, p.3: 6 September 1887, p.5: 12 September 1887, p.5: 3 October 1887, p.5: 10 October 1887, p.5.

[196] GSWP, vol. 4, to F. Roberts, 20 August 1887, demi-official.

[197] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.85.

also reported to be ready to join the Shwegyobyu Prince.[198]

The situation in the Lower Chindwin looked especially dangerous because of the involvement of the Myingun Prince who was in Pondicherry. As we know, the Myingun Prince had for a long time been trying to come to Upper Burma through the Shan States. Early in 1886 he reached as far as Saigon with the help of the French authorities.. But the attempt was not a success for reasons which have already been explained.[199] Then for a year and a half no other such attempt was reported, although the Prince's adherents were constantly active in the eastern part of the Mandalay district. But after the collapse of the Limbin Confederacy and the surrender of the Limbin Prince in May 1887 a serious attempt on the part of the Myingun Prince to reach Saigon and thence to Upper Burma through the Shan States looked inevitable. A great deal of excitement in the rebel camp of the Mandalay district was reported. Crosthwaite wired the Viceroy in August 1887 that no endeavours should be spared to preventMyingun from reaching Saigon.[200]

Crosthwaite's anxiety was justified. From a number of papers intercepted afterwards, it appears that some of the leading Shan Chiefs had been in touch with the MyingunPrince ever since Limbin's surrender. These Shan Chiefs, who felt themselves betrayed by the Limbin Prince, sent certain messengers to Pondicherry to inform the MyingunPrince that they were on his side.[201] Myingun welcomed this

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[198] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.85.

[199] See above, pp.184-185.

[200] HC, vol.96, p.1393.

[201] PSCI, vol. 57, p.74.

opportunity as God-sent. He wrote them separately, assigning each a specific task. He wrote to the Kyaingyon Sawbwa that he planned to march through Kyaingyon from the Annam-Chinese frontier, and that the Sawbwa should receive him.[202] The Yatsauk Sawbwa was asked to carry on the struggle against the English in his name,[203] while the Mainguaung Sawbwa was given the task of enlisting the sympathy of other Sawbwas for the cause.[204] Each of these Sawbwas was also categorically assured of French assistance in the struggle against the English.

While Myingun was corresponding with the Shan Sawbwas, his special emissary, Maung Ba, known as the Bayingan Prince, was trying to organise a rebellion in Upper Burma proper. The bad situation in the Lower Chindwin seems to have offered a good opportunity to the Bayingan Prince. He quickly found an ally in Maung Thagyi of Pagyi.[205] He was also reported to be corresponding with the Shwegyobyu Prince.[206]

Early in October the Bayingan Prince was reported to be working with Maung Thagyi at the village of Chaungwa.[207] It was a strongly fortified village. Lieutenant Plumer with a force of Mounted Infantry surprised the village. But Maung Thagyi and the Bayingan Prince

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[202] PSCI, vol. 57, p.78, Letter to the Kyaingyon Sawbwa, 24 October 1887.

[203] Ibid., Letter to the Yatsauk Sawbwa, 24 October 1887.

[204] Ibid., pp, 78-79, Letter to the Mainguaung Sawbwa, 24 October 1887.

[205] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.88.

[206] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.88.

[207] Ibid., p.86.

escaped. Numerous important books, correspondence and documents were found in the village. They showed the existence of a conspiracy for a general rising in connection with Mandalay, Sagaing, Kyaukse and the Shan States.[208] The following is a translation of one of the documents:

> "I, the Bayingan Prince, brother of the Myingun Prince, write to the Chief Bo Nyo U and other Chiefs in Sagaing as follows. I have been to all Sawbwas, Bo Gyôks /Chief Bos/, and other Bos of the north, south, and east, and have given orders and administered oaths which they have taken; they have promised to serve loyally, and we intend to drive the British from Kani and Pagyi and take Alôn, Shwebo, Dabayen, &c., and go up to Mandalay in month of Tazaungmôn."[209]

After his escape from Choungwa, Maung Thagyi with the help of the Bayingan Prince began to collect men from his villages.[210] By the middle of October he could command some 2,000 men.[211] On 16 October Major Kennedy and Captain Beville with a force attacked Maung Thagyi and the Bayingan Prince at the village of Chinbyit. The rebels had some 200 men with them.[212] A stout resistance was encountered. The rebels were overpowered, but Major Kennedy and Captain Beville were killed. A large number of rebels was killed, which included the Bayingan Prince and Maung Thagyi.[213]

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[208] MLEI, vol. 974, Narrative of Events: week ending 15 October 1887, p.1, Vide No. 224 of December 1887. See also The Times, 15 November 1887, p.5.

[209] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.88. Tazaungmôn = the eighth month in the Burmese year, nearly answering to November.

[210] MLEI, vol. 974, week ending 15 October, p.2.

[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid., M 315/1888, week ending 22 October, p.1.

[213] Ibid., p.2. It was at first thought that Maung Thagyi and the Bayingan Prince escaped on elephants. But later on it was confirmed by the villagers of Chinbyit that Maung Thagyi and the Bayingan Prince were amongst the killed. Ibid., p.2, week ending 29 October, 5 November; GSWP, vol. 4, Letter to Gen. Low, 6 November, demi-official.

It is not known whether the Shwegyobyu Prince was there. If he was there he must have escaped unhurt, for throughout the cold weather he gave a good deal of trouble to the British. Early in December Lieutenant Hunter with a force encountered the Prince, but could not capture him.[214] The Prince continued to grow in strength, although General Low had gone up to the Chindwin and taken charge of the operations.[215] Early in March 1888 the Prince was reported to have intimated his intention of attacking the villagers, who had assisted the British.[216] His men were now working all over the Lower Chindwin tract. Perhaps they were trying to organise a large scale rising.[217]

Simultaneously with the operations undertaken against the bos mentioned above, attempts were also made to break the power of bos like Nga Yaing of Shwebo, Nga Zeya of Mandalay, and Bo Cho of Myingyan. In July 1887 Nga Yaing was reported to be very active. His men murdered a Thugyi and attacked two villages around Sheinmaga.[218] Captain Milton came on his tracks but lost him.[219] Bo Zeya was also active during the first half of 1887.[220] But from September his position seems to have been considerably weakened

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[214] MLEI, vol. 977, M 1812/1888, week ending 10 December, p.2.

[215] GSWP, vol. 4, to Low, 6 November. demi-official.

[216] MLEI., vol. 979, M 4691/1888, p.2, week ending 10 March 1888.

[217] Ibid., vol. 980, M 5364/1888, p.2.

[218] Ibid., vol. 974, Field Journal for July 1887, p.6, Vide No. 210 of November 1887.

[219] Ibid., p.7.

[220] Ibid., vol. 972, M 9390/1887, p.10, Field Journal for May 1887.

owing to scarcity of provisions.[221] Bo Cho was also very active during the rainy season.[222] But he was constantly hunted by British troops, so that early in November he gave himself up to the British.[223] This was undoubtedly a very important achievement, because Bo Cho had taken the field against the British ever since the occupation of Mandalay.

Thus we see that simultaneously with the organisation of civil administration the troops were constantly engaged in breaking up numerous rebel bands which had infested Upper Burma. The results produced by their operations were in many cases highly successful. Bo Shwe, Maung Thagyi and the Bayingan Prince were killed; Bo Zeya's power was broken and Bo Cho's surrender was effected. These results, which no doubt constituted a significant step forward towards the pacification of Upper Burma from military point of view, greatly contributed towards strengthening the newly organised machinery of civil administration.

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[221] MLEI, vol. 974, week ending 10 September 1887, p.1.

[222] Ibid., vol. 971, week ending 4 June, p.2, Vide No. 114 of July 1887; week ending 25 June, p.2, Vide No. 126 of August 1887; vol. 973, M 10721/1887, p.6: M 10938/1887, p.2.

[223] Ibid., vol. 974, M 315/1888. See also GSWP, vol. 4, Letter to Gen. Low, 6 November 1887.

Chapter Six

THE FINAL PHASE OF THE PACIFICATION: THE WORKING OF CROSTHWAITE'S VILLAGE SYSTEM

With the Village Regulation of 1887 began the final phase of the pacification of Upper Burma. As we have seen, under Section 3 of the Regulation the Deputy Commissioner was empowered to appoint a headman[1] in every village or group of villages. So by the end of 1888 headmen were appointed in most of the villages.[2] Each headman was given a copy of the Regulation in Burmese. The District Officers, Subdivisional Officers, and Myoôks did their best to explain to the headman the meaning of the Regulation, the nature and extent of his powers, and the manner in which the provisions of the Regulation should be worked.[3]

But the work of organising the village system was from the beginning accompanied by certain difficulties. The general principle on which the new system was based was that every village should have a headman. In fact, in Burmese times almost every village had a headman.[4] But many of these villages were not only very small, they were also situated "within sight or hail of each other".[5] In

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[1] The new headman was afterwards officially called Ywathugyi.

[2] BHP, vol. 3352, March 1889 (Police), pp. 46-68, Reports by the Deputy Commissioners, August-December 1888.

[3] Upper Burma Village Manual (Rangoon 1896), p.14, Judicial Dept. Circular No. 10 of 1889, Vide Circulars of the Financial Commissioner for the year 1899, vol. X (Rangoon 1898).

[4] In the Kyaukse district, for instance, about 400 villages had one Thugyi each, while over the greater part of the Myadaung district village Thugyis were found one to each village, IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), pp. 874, 883.

[5] Upper Burma Village Manual, p.10, Crosthwaite's Minute on Village Administration, 6 October 1890.

the Lower Chindwin district, for instance, many such villages had from 12.2 to 10 houses each.[6] These could not be accepted as independent units. Multiplication of headmen, in such cases, was not only useless, it was also inconvenient.[7] There was the question of remunerating the headmen. As the British still continued the old method of paying to the headmen 10% of the thathameda collections, a headman having only one small village under him could expect very little money. In Burmese times, even although the commission was small, the headman of the small village could make up the deficiency by other means. He could generally manage to appropriate some of the revenue. He could sometimes extort money from the villagers.[8] And he could easily evade his duties if he made himself agreeable to his superiors, and thus have time to engage in other occupations. But now these sources of additional income were wholly or partially closed. He had to depend on the commission alone. If this commission was insufficient he could not be expected to discharge his duties honestly and efficiently, and respectable persons would never come forward to accept the post of headman. So these small villages were grouped by a careful process of amalgamation, some two or three of them making a unit.[9] But this was not always an easy job. The hereditary

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[6] BHP, vol. 3352, March 1889 (Polic), p.59, Report by the Deputy Commissioner, Lower Chindwin.

[7] Upper Burma Village Manual, p.10, Crosthwaite's Minute.

[8] Thus, during the reign of King Thibaw, the Thugyi of the Kyigan village, Nga Nyan Paw, was reported to have sold some plots of land for 300 silver pieces and extorted 1,000 silver pieces from the villagers in addition to usual thathameda collections. See Selections from the Records of the Hlutdaw, compiled by Taw Sein Ko, Government Translator (Rangoon 1889), p.92.

[9] This is why the words "group of villages" were added to Section 3 of the Regulation.

principle was adhered to as far as possible.[10] But when three small villages were amalgamated there were sometimes three hereditary candidates for the new unit. Under Section 3 of the Regulation the Deputy Commissioner had the power to decide which of them should be the headman. It was indeed a difficult task for the Deputy Commissioner to choose the right man. On an occasion like this he had to prove himself a true judge of a man's character. Sometimes no hereditary candidate was found suitable for a unit. In that case the headman was imported from outside.[11] This was sometimes a risky procedure for nobody knew how much allegiance that outsider was able to get from the people of his new jurisdiction.

Thus we see that the task of appointing a headman, especially where two or three small villages were amalgamated, was sometimes very difficult. Moreover, this procedure threw numerous Thugyis together with their clerks, peons, and messengers out of employment. These clerks, peons, and messengers were not however a problem. They might be easily provided with some kind of job under the new arrangement. The problem was with the Thugyis. They had no job and were therefore discontented. Crosthwaite himself admitted this.[12]

Another problem which the British had to face during the early months of the operation of the Village Regulation was that the new headmen were reluctant to use the powers given them under Section 6

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[10] Burma Gazetteer: Kyaukse District (Rangoon 1925), vol. A, p. 113; Burma Gazetteer: Yamethin District (Rangoon 1934), vol. A, p.110; Burma Gazetteer: Mandalay District (Rangoon 1928), vol. A, p.168.

[11] Burma Gazetteer: Kyaukse District, vol. A, p.113.

[12] Upper Burma Village Manual, p.12, Crosthwaite's Minute.

of the Regulation. The Regulation, as we have seen,[13] had given them certain police and magisterial powers. But during 1888 not a single headman used his powers.[14] Of course, in other matters related to the Regulation the headmen had to co-operate with the district authorities. For instance, the track law was systematically worked from the beginning. Whenever a dacoity occurred the tracks of the perpetrators were followed and,if traced to a village, the matter was reported to the village authorities who were bound to either give up the cattle or show that the tracks led out of the village lands, failing in this a fine equal to the value of the stolen cattle was levied. Thus, in the Minbu, Taungdwingyi, Myingyan, Ye-U, Pakokku and the Lower Chindwin districts, fines were imposed under Section 9 of the Regulation in sixty cases during 1888.[15] Naturally the headmen had to assist the authorities in collecting these fines.

But, for the headman, to assist the British in collecting fines was one thing, to impose fines himself on fellow villagers as an officer of the British Government was another. This latter responsibility, compared with the former, involved a greater risk, especially at a time when the country was still disturbed. There was always a fear of retribution from the rebels. From 1886 onwards numerous Thugyis suspected of collaboration were killed throughout Upper Burma. Thus in the Sagaing district alone forty-one Thugyis

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[13] See above, p.229.

[14] BHP, vol. 3352, March 1889 (Police), pp. 46-68.

[15] Ibid.

were killed between 1886 and 1888.[16] So headmen were naturally afraid of doing anything which would make them the main targets of rebel attack. Thus the Deputy Commissioner of Myingyan reported in September 1888:

> "As a recent return shows the position of a village headman supposed to represent the British Government is a sufficiently ticklish one in itself and he would naturally prefer to disarm suspicion by adhering to the Burmese methods of settling disputes which came before him."[17]

It is in his attempt to disarm suspicion that the headman was often ready to say that he had not even read his copy of the Regulation. This is why the Deputy Commissioner of Meiktila did not meet a headman who had "even read the Act".[18] The Deputy Commissioner submitted his report early in September 1888 - almost a year after the Regulation was put into operation. So it seems most unlikely that a headman did not "even read" his copy during that period.

This reluctance on the part of the headmen to use their powers was, however, a temporary phenomenon. The Deputy Commissioner of Meiktila, continuing his report, wrote: "when they have complete confidence in the stability of our rule they will enter into the spirit of their duties".[19] In fact, this is what happened. As events were to show, with the vigorous application of the punitive provisions of the Village Regulation the headmen became more and more co-operative.

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[16] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.18, letter from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner to Govt. of India, 6 September 1889.

[17] Ibid., vol. 3352, March 1889 (Police), p.50.

[18] Ibid., p.49, letter from the Deputy Commissioner, Meiktila, 8 September 1888.

[19] Ibid.

The Village Regulation of 1887 did not say much about the old established powerful institution of the Myothugyi.[20] On the other hand, the powers and duties which it gave to the new headmen tend to suggest that the dissolution of the Myothugyis' jurisdictions and the ultimate abolition of the institution itself were inevitable. In fact, the process of dissolution had already begun. After the Village Regulation was put into operation no new Myothugyi or circle Thugyi, under whatever designation, was created. Furthermore, on the death, dismissal or resignation of a Myothugyi, no successor was appointed.

The reasons why the British did not abolish the institution immediately are not far to seek. First, its abolition meant that scores of Myothugyis would be thrown out of their privileged position. These men could not be expected to quit their position voluntarily. They were likely to put up a resistance, especially in places which were not sufficiently covered by troops and police. With troubles on hand the British could not afford to push these Myothugyis into direct opposition. So in such cases their policy was to watch carefully and then, at an opportune moment, strike fast at points where a possible resistance could be quickly neutralised by massive concentration of troops.

Secondly, there were many Myothugyis who had assisted the British from the beginning. Thus in Pyinmana, out of five townships,

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[20] See above, pp. 228-230.

in two cases the leading Myothugyis assisted the British. They were made Myooks.[21] In Yanaung the old Myothugyi was continued in his post because of his loyalty to the British.[22] The Myothugyis of Myotha and Yenangyaung also assisted the British. These men could not be removed by force. The British had a certain moral obligation towards them.

Thirdly, as we have already seen,[23] some Deputy Commissioners were strongly in favour of maintaining the indigenous system. One of them even described the Myothugyi as the backbone of the social system.[24] These officials came from Lower Burma. So they abolished or set aside village headmen in favour of circle Thugyis after the Lower Burma fashion. Even after the policy of the Government was made known these officers, or at least some of them, were unable to refrain from creating circles or enlarging the jurisdiction of Thugyis whenever an opportunity arose.[25] Thus D. Smeaton, the Commissioner of the Central Division, in his letter to the Financial Commissioner dated 18 February 1890, wrote: "Officers have carried their Lower Burma propensities and proclivities to Upper Burma, and have allowed these prejudices in favour of the big taiks to run away with them."[26] The Financial Commissioner also made a similar observation. He wrote early in July 1890 that these officers "engrafted

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[21] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), p.862, Memorandum by St. G. Tucker, Commissioner, Eastern Div., on Thugyi arrangements.

[22] Ibid.

[23] See above, p. 217

[24] IUBP, vol. 2967, December 1887 (Judicial), p.882, Report by G.W. Shaw, Deputy Commissioner of Myadaung, 18 May 1887.

[25] Upper Burma Village Manual, p.12, Crosthwaite's Minute.

[26] BHP, vol. 3576, September 1890 (Police), p.? Taik = circle

on the Upper Burma stock the Lower Burma village system."[27]

Such were the reasons why no drastic measures were taken at first with regard to the institution of the Myothugyi. But the success of Crosthwaite's village system depended on the dissolution of the Myothugyis' jurisdictions. Crosthwaite was fully convinced about this. This is why he was not happy on the eve of his departure from Burma as he saw that the institution was still maintained in its traditional form. He urged that measures should be taken "to prevent the growth of further excrescences on the village system and to get rid as soon as possible of those which exist, whether they are an inheritance from the old Government or the creation of our own officers."[28]

Thus, so far as the British were concerned, the task of organising the village system was a slow and painstaking process. And to the Burmese people the changes thus introduced were not easily comprehensible because these were revolutionary - perhaps more revolutionary than the abolition of kingship. King Thibaw was deported

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[27] BHP, vol. 3576, September 1890 (Police), p.?

[28] Upper Burma Village Manual, p.13, Crosthwaite's Minute. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Crosthwaite's successor, applied the Village Regulation more vigorously than Crosthwaite did. But larger jurisdictions under the Myothugyis still continued to exist. In 1896 power was taken to abolish the old established institution. Upper Burma Village Manual, p.17. But the system still continued to exist for many years to come, although the number of Myothugyis was gradually reduced. A few instances may be given. In Shwebo and Ye-U districts there were as many as 54 circle headmen in 1889-90. By 1901 this number was reduced to 14. In 1902 nine of them were abolished and by 1916 only the Myothugyi of Myinmu remained, Burma Gazetteer: Shwebo District (Rangoon 1929), vol. A, p.153. In 1924 the Mandalay district still had 13 Myothugyis, Burma Gazetteer: Mandalay District, vol. A, p.168.

and his kingdom was incorporated into the British Empire, but hopes of a restoration of kingship did not vanish from the minds of the Burmese people. In fact, such hopes grew stronger as various minthas or princes appeared on the scene from time to time, and these seem to have survived, although in a limited way, through the early years of the twentieth century.[29] But with the destruction of the traditional village system the old days were definitely gone. The changes which the Regulation brought about shook the traditional Burmese society to its very foundations. A brief account of these changes is necessary to understand this point.

The Regulation of 1887 contemplated that the village should be the administrative unit in every respect. So it required the Deputy Commissioner to appoint a headman to every village, except in those cases where several small villages were so situated that they could be grouped under one headman without interfering with his responsibility or the efficient discharge of the duties required of him under the Regulation. Thus, on the surface, the old system, so far as the village headman was concerned, was not much disturbed. But in reality it was the form, and not the spirit, of the old system which was maintained. The new headman was a representative of an alien government with alien ideas of administration. True the headman in Burmese times was also a representative of the Government, because, apart from his duties to collect and pay

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[29] One of King Thibaw's sons is reported to have continued the resistance until 1922. See The Times, 1 April 1922, p.11.

in taxes, he had an overall responsibility to look after the well-being of his people. It was not a self-imposed responsibility; it was conditional to the hereditary position which he held as the headman of the village. This is clear from the Gwegyo village Sittan of 1802 in which the Thugyi, Maung Shweiwa, wrote that in loyal regard of his oath to the Myothugyi he would perform his duties with all the people in his charge.[30] But, in spite of this, he had not been a representative of the Government in the sense that the new headman was. He had been more a spokesman of the village than a Government official and as such the villagers had managed themselves through him. The village was a self-governing social unit. It assessed its own taxes, and settled all its minor affairs. A big crime, a land dispute with a neighbouring village, or a question of reserved timber, might bring them into contact with higher authority but, speaking generally, the village managed its own affairs through its headman and elders and the central government mattered to it hardly at all.[31] Of course, sometimes the weight of the King's rule was felt at places in the immediate vicinity of the capital. But distant places were virtually independent.[32] They paid little more heed to the ruling monarch than to swear allegiance whenever visited by his officers.[33]

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[30] Sittans collected by J.S.Furnivall, in possession of Professor Frank N. Trager.

[31] Fielding Hall, A People at School (London 1906), pp. 27-28; The Soul of a People (London 1898), pp. 90-91.

[32] Harvey, History of Burma (London 1925), p.332; Hugh Tinker, The Foundations of Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma (London 1954), p.23.

[33] Frank Vincent, The Land of the White Elephant: A personal narrative of travel and adventure in Further India (London 1873), p.62.

This self-governing character of the village tended to foster a cordial relationship between the headman and the villagers. The headman not only lived among the villagers, he also belonged to them. With him the villagers composed their songs, shared their gladness and village fêtes and to him they took their household cares.[34] In other words, he was one of the villagers, his official position having no impact on his relations with them. Again, when the villagers had any problem the headman, having considered this as his own, co-operated with them to find a solution. The following extract from the letter written by the Headman and Elders of the village of Kyeegan Lake to the Secretary to Bodawpaya's Treasurer is worth noting in this connection:

> "The date fixed by you, lord, for the final payment of taxes and tolls is past, but the revenue from our village still remains uncollected. In this present time of change and discord, the villagers face a financial crisis of their own. The expected and carefully calculated income, so regular in the past, has failed to accrue; the creditors press for re-payment of debts, and all business, trade and crafts are in a disturbed state. On top of it all, there are old taxes and new tolls to pay. Troubled and despondent, many villagers have abandoned their property and left the village ..... we humbly plead that the collection of taxes and tolls be postponed for some months."[35]

It would, however, be wrong to suppose that the headman was never unfair to his people. In fact, his position was such as to make him unfair sometimes. In his official position he was subordinate to the Myothugyi. From the Hlesatun Village Sittan of 1784 and

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[34] Harvey, History of Burma, p.332.

[35] Epistles Written on the Eve of the Anglo-Burmese War, translated and introduced by Maung Htin Aung (The Hague, 1968), p.23.

the Hmekkaya Village Sittan of 1802 we see that the headman had to comply with the orders of the Myothugyi regarding demands for services and money.[36] His post was permanent and in practice often hereditary, no doubt, but he knew that he might be thrown out at any time if he incurred the displeasure of the Myothugyi who was close to the Wun or the Court in general. So he was always ready to comply with the wishes of the Myothugyi or any other powerful official, however unreasonable these might be. One example may be cited in this connection. In King Mindon's reign a land tax of 20% on the crops was imposed in the riverine villages. This was remitted by Thibaw, but was nevertheless continued by the Myothugyis ostensibly to meet any possible requisition from the capital. But the amounts collected appear mostly to have gone into their own pockets.[37] This could not have been done without the co-operation of the Thugyis. Furthermore, there were also cases of maltreatment of villagers by the Thugyis.[38]

Thus the headman was sometimes unfair to his people. But on the whole his relationship with his people was very cordial. Now his traditional image was completely destroyed. The hitherto self-governing village was now brought under the direct control of the Government and the headman became a Government official. He was given innumerable duties to perform: to count the houses correctly for the taxes, to arrest bad characters, to help the police, to trace

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[36] Sittans collected by Furnivall, in possession of Professor Trager.

[37] SR, Katha, 1903-1906 (Rangoon 1906), p.48.

[38] Selections from the Records of the Hlutdaw, p.92.

stolen cattle, to keep up the village fences, to register deaths, to provide supplies for officials, and to try certain cases. He was personally responsible, and he was dismissed or suspended or fined under section 7 of the Regulation for every dereliction of duty. So his authority was largely gone. Villagers had little respect left for their headman after he had been fined or scolded or sent for to sit in a court house.[39]

The new headman was no longer the spokesman of the village. It was still his duty to look after the well-being of his people. But the difference is that he would no longer be a signatory to any application which the villagers might send to the higher authorities. All that he was supposed to do was to forward such application with necessary comments. Again, he continued to participate in a village pwè or a village fête as before, but his presence was now viewed with great concern because loose talk might prove disastrous to the entire community.[40] Thus the whole traditional concept of his belonging to the community was totally changed.

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[39] Fielding Hall, A People at School, pp. 188-189. The Deputy Commissioners treated the new headmen with utmost leniency, bearing in mind the fact that the ideas on which the new system was based were new to the Burmese headmen. But nevertheless the number of headmen punished under section 7 of the Regulation was quite large. Thus, according to the 1890 returns, out of 6,372 headmen in Upper Burma, 102 were dismissed, 7 suspended and 264 fined. The dismissals were mostly in consequence of such offences as misappropriation of Government revenue, extortion, and harbouring of 'dacoits'. Fines were imposed for less serious offences, such as careless preparation of the Thathameda returns, failing to keep the village fence in repair, omitting to report crime and the like. See BHP, vol. 3809, September 1891 (Police), Statement No. 1, pp. 32-33.

[40] The Regulation of 1887 assumed that the headman would live among his people and know all that was going on about him, Upper Burma Village Manual, p.11, Crosthwaite's Minute.

In fact, the Regulation of 1887 contemplated this change. It sought to create a headman who would be both respected and feared by his people. This is clear from the Chief Commissioner's Resolution of 24 December 1888. The Resolution clearly explained what the exact position of the new headman should be. The position which the law gave to the headman was that of the Chief or Magistrate of the village. It was a dignified position. If the headman was not treated in accordance with his legal position his post would not be looked upon by villagers as one of consideration and to be coveted. The village organisation, the Resolution continued, depended on the subordination of the villagers to their headmen, and that subordination could not be maintained unless the headmen were treated with proper consideration and respect. The Chief Commissioner, therefore, directed that every headman should be entitled to carry a silver-mounted da,[40a] and that selected headmen should also be entitled to have a red umbrella carried before them as the insignia of their office. Thus every effort was made to maintain the dignity and position of the new headman.

The changes which came over the institution of Myothugyi were no less revolutionary. The Regulation retained the institution, no doubt, but the traditional position of the Myothugyi was overshadowed by that of the new headman and as such the institution was discredited in the eyes of the people. Moreover, the breaking up of a Myothugyi's jurisdiction following his dismissal, resignation or death was a clear indication of the fact that the abolition of the institution was only a question of time. The Burmese people did not fail to understand this. To them it was a big thing. But Crosthwaite did not

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[40a] See below p. 330 for definition of da.

think so. He held an altogether different view. He thought that the Myothugyis were not originally very important officials and that they became important only after usurping much of the power of Thugyis.[41]

But Crosthwaite's view does not seem to be acceptable. Although the origin of Myothugyi is not definitely known,[42] there is ample evidence to prove that Crosthwaite's view was unfounded. From some of the available Sittans submitted by the Myothugyis in 1784 and 1802 we have already noticed how for generations succession passed from one male member of the family to another. These Sittans also give us an idea about the nature of authority which the Myothugyis had traditionally exercised in their jurisdictions. A few extracts from some of the Hanthawaddi Sittans are worth noting in this connection.

The Myothugyi of Ma-U (1802) wrote:

> "In order that the towns and villages might be pleasant and prosperous, I fed and supported those who were pleased to come from district towns and villages and other neighbourhoods. I took care that the poor men who arrived were not scattered abroad but gathered them in and ruled them..... I have built up the villages of Mata, Kyugyaung, Malit, Dabein, Tathi, Kawdun, Maso, and Kyizu."[43]

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[41] Upper Burma Village Manual, p.12, Crosthwaite's Minute. Grant Brown, who was an officer in Upper Burma , also held a similar view. He wrote that the Myothugyi was an irregular and accidental feature of the village system, Burma As I Saw It (London 1926), p.201.

[42] Daw Mya Sein thinks that the Myothugyi might have originated from the tribal organisation of Burmese society, Administration of Burma (Rangoon 1938), pp. 45-46. Crawfurd thought that it grew out of the royal practice of granting villages to men for particular services, Journal of An Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava, Second Edition, vol. II (London 1834), pp. 163-164.

[43] J.S.Furnivall, "Some Historical Documents", JBRS, vol. VI, Part III, 1916, pp. 222-223.

The Myothugyi of Htandawgyi (1802) wrote that as a result of his youth the people were scattered abroad in distant towns and villages and that he "welcomed and gathered in strangers in order to build up towns and villages in the desert places of high jungle and tall grass".[44]

The Myothugyi of Zaung-du (1802) wrote how his father built up the myo out of a waste of high jungle and tall grass where the elephant dwelt and the tiger had domination. He wrote:

> "As it was uninhabited, the governor of Hanthawaddi ..... gave my father Nga Myat Tin letter of appointment directing him to gather in people regardless of their group or service and to establish a town. My father Nga Myat Tin established the Myo and was in charge of it."[45]

Thus the kind of authority which the Myothugyi was supposed to have could not have ever been possessed by a village Thugyi. The Myothugyi was not only a powerful person, he was also a highly privileged person, his position being far above the Thugyis and the ordinary villagers. He lived in the most defensible area with the best facilities for water and the richest and most secure land.[46] He had the privilege of appearing in the palace, to pay homage periodically, and his wife had the right of presentation.[47] He had

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[44] Furnivall, "Some Historical Documents", JBRS, vol. VIII, Part 1, 1918, p.48.

[45] Ibid., p.49.

[46] Furnivall, An Introduction to the Political Economy of Burma (Rangoon 1938), p.104.

[47] Harvey, British Rule in Burma, 1824-1942 (London 1946), pp. 23-24.

a gold umbrella carried before him as a mark of his exalted position.

This position was to a large extent the result of his good service to the King. He not only helped to fill the King's coffers, his contributions to the King's war efforts were remarkable. Thus the Myothugyi of Mye-dai, Maung Shwe-meng, helped the King in the First Anglo-Burmese War with a force of 500 soldiers.[48] The Myothugyi of Thayet, Maung Po, also fought with 500 men under Bandoola. His son Maung Thaing was a great favourite of King Tharrawaddy, who gave him higher titles and insignia of rank than were given to any other Myothugyi.[49] The Myothugyis of Mindat and Mindon also served in the First War with a force each.[50]

Thus the Myothugyis were traditionally very powerful persons. Europeans who came into contact with Burma during the later part of and early part of the 19th the 18th/century mentioned Myothugyi and Thugyi in their accounts. Symes and Cox spoke of "Miou-gee" and "Mewthaghee" respectively in their accounts.[51] Snodgrass, speaking of Myothugyis, wrote that they were a better class of chiefs, who stood in a very different relation to the crown and who were found ready to fill the situations so much required, to maintain order and peace among the population. They enjoyed, Snodgrass continued, a large share of influence in the management of their respective districts.[52] Trant

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[48] Statistical and Historical Account of the District of Thayetmyo, Pegu Division of British Burma (Rangoon 1873), p.93.

[49] Ibid.,p. 99.

[50] Ibid., pp. 106-107. Thus there was a feudal character about the functions and powers of the Myothugyis. See Taw Sein Ko, Burmese Sketches (Rangoon 1913), p.302; D.G.E.Hall, Burma(London 1956), p.135; F.S.V.Donnison, Burma (London 1970), pp. 67-68.

[51] Symes, An Account of an Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava sent by the Governor-General of India in the year 1795 (London 1800), vol, 2, pp. 92, 95-96;. Cox, Journal of a Residence in the Burmhan Empire (London 1821), p.33.

[52] Snodgrass, Narrative of the Burmese War (London 1827), p.200.

mentioned "musghis" in charge of minor districts.[53] He also mentioned "chiefs of the small villages".[54] Presumably, these latter officials were the Thugyis. Crawfurd wrote that the administration of the township was entrusted to an officer named Myothugyi, that of the village to a chief named Thugyi.[55] The former, he continued, exercised more authority than the village chief. All these references tend to suggest that Crosthwaite's theory of usurpation was unfounded.[56]

Crosthwaite's policy of breaking up the Myothugyis' jurisdictions can only be justified in the light of the pragmatic considerations of the situation. But it may be argued that the jurisdictions of the Myothugyis could have been retained with the Myothugyis being allowed to perform the functions of the Myoôks. This would have produced at least one good result, namely , the continuity of policy at the town level as well. The Myoôk as a civil servant was subject to frequent transfer and rarely stayed long enough in one place to learn all that was necessary for good administration, whereas the Myothugyi was a local man whose ancestors had held the office before him.

Simultaneously with the reorganisation of the village system attempts were made to deal with the rebels by using the powers given by the Village Regulation. The Regulation, as we have seen, gave

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[53] Trant, Two Years in Ava (London 1827), p.244.

[54] Ibid., p.246.

[55] Crawfurd, vol. II, op.cit., p.142.

[56] Donnison, with reference to Crosthwaite's theory, wrote that the Myothugyis were an institution at least as vital and important as that of the village headmen, Public Administration in Burma (London 1953), pp. 31-32.

extraordinary powers to the Deputy Commissioner to deal with the rebels. If anybody was found in the habit of harbouring, aiding, or abetting 'dacoits' he might be removed from his village by order of the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner was also empowered to fine, if necessary, the entire population of a village. The principle adopted was to bring continuous pressure to bear on villages which supported the dacoit or rebel gangs in order to show clearly that it was to their interest to side with the Government rather than with the rebels or dacoits.[57]

In this matter also the British were from the beginning handicapped by one practical difficulty. There was a constant shortage of civilian staff. The task was basically a political one. It could be accomplished only by a personal contact between the civil officers and the people. The army's position was one of aid-to-civil authority. It would step in only when asked. The civil officers, backed by the army, would go to the disaffected areas, meet the people, and apply every bit of their intelligence to persuade them to co-operate with the authorities in capturing the Bos. If the initial attempts failed, they would, if necessary, stay around for days before military action became necessary. This kind of work could not be done without sufficient staff. Crosthwaite knew this well. But he also knew that to procure trained men for Burma was not an easy job. He wrote later:

> "The annexation of Upper Burma was more difficult in some ways than the annexation of the Punjab. In the latter case there was in the army and in the adjacent

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[57] ARB, 1888-1889 (Rangoon 1889), Part 1, p.7.

> provinces a supply of officers acquainted if not with the language of the Punjab, yet with a kindred speech. The whole cadre of Lower Burma was only threescore men, and it was impossible to take many men fit for service in Upper Burma from its ranks without leaving the Lower province very much undermanned."[58]

However, Crosthwaite kept on pressing the Indian Government for an increase in the civilian staff. The Government of India, as we know, fixed the strength of the Commission at 114 and, in addition to this, allowed Crosthwaite 24 Extra Assistant Commissioners. But the number was still insufficient. The Government of India appreciated the difficulty. Lord Lansdowne,[59] who succeeded Lord Dufferin[60] as Viceroy on 10 December 1888, wrote to Lord Cross in June 1889: "Crosthwaite's difficulties have been increased by the fact that his Commission is by no means a strong one."[61] Cross, in his letter of 12 July, assured the Viceroy that he would do his utmost to support the Viceroy in any demands which the latter might think it right to make.[62] In a subsequent letter he gave a still more categorical assurance. He wrote: "If Crosthwaite wants more assistance, of course he must have it. I have always held it to be the most false economy to be undermanned, and so I shall tell my Council whenever you ask me to do so."[63] Thus we see that although considerations of economy were always in the forefront of Government policy,

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[58] Crosthwaite, The Pacification of Burma (London 1912), p.94.

[59] Lord Lansdowne (1845-1927) was a liberal. He held minor posts in two Gladstonian administrations and acted with his party in opposition to Disraeli's government of 1874 to 1880. On the return of the liberals to power in 1880, he was appointed under-secretary of State for India. In 1883 he was offered the governor-generalship of Canada. In 1888 he became Viceroy of India.

[60] From India Lord Dufferin was sent to Rome as Ambassador (1888-1891). Then he became Ambassador in Paris (1891-1896). He died on 12 February 1902.

[61] LP, vol. 2, p.37, from Lansdowne, 28 June 1889 (India Office Library, Mss. Eur. D.558).

[62] Ibid., p.58, from Cross, 12 July 1889.

[63] Ibid., p.61, from Cross, 26 July 1889.

the Home authorities were prepared to provide Crosthwaite with the necessary man-power.

At the beginning of 1889 the strength of the Commission was raised from 114 to 123.[64] But the problem was still there. In fact, it became more and more acute because of the changing circumstances. As the work of pacification advanced new responsibilities developed. For instance, special operations were undertaken in certain areas or special enquiries were conducted regarding the unfriendly disposition of certain Chiefs. Civilian officers were essential for such special undertakings. These had to be provided out of the existing limited staff. The result was that the normal administrative work of the districts and subdivisions suffered considerably.[65]

So with the limited man-power at his disposal Crosthwaite proceeded to deal with the situation. The punitive provisions of the Village Regulation were vigorously applied throughout Upper Burma. They were first experimented with in the Sagaing district. Sagaing was one of the most disturbed districts in Upper Burma.[66]

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[64] ARB, 1888-1889, Part II, p. 4.

[65] At the end of 1886 there were 17 districts in Upper Burma: Mandalay, Bhamo, Katha, Ruby Mines, Shwebo (Northern Div.), Ava, Sagaing, Ye-U Kyaukse, Chindwin (Central Div.), Myingyan, Pagan, Minbu, Taungdwingyi (Southern Div.), Meiktila, Yamethin and Ningyan - afterwards Pyinmana (Eastern Div.). In 1887 the Chindwin district was divided into two - the Upper Chindwin and the Lower Chindwin. But simultaneously Ava was amalgamated with Sagaing. So the number remained 17. In 1888 further changes were made in the 4 districts of the Southern Division. The Pagan district was abolished; a new district with headquarters at Pakokku was formed and the name of the Taungdwingyi district was changed to Magwe. But these changes in the Southern Division did not make any addition to the number of districts. So the number continued to remain 17.

[66] GSWP, vol. 5, Letter to F. Roberts, 18 March 1888 (India Office Library, Mss. Eur. F.108); The Times, 13 August 1888, p.5: 17 September 1888, p.5; HTWP, Crosthwaite to White, 3 July 1888.

It was also, owing to the nature of the country, a difficult district to deal with. Rebel or dacoit bands when attacked broke up into small parties, and found easy shelter in the forests and hills. A brief account of the operations in the Sagaing district is necessary to understand the nature of the work of pacification in its final phase.

Colonel Penn Symons was selected to undertake operations in the Sagaing district.[67] As these operations were of a special nature, unity of command was considered to be the most essential thing. So Symons was given the command of the Sagaing military police battalion and the troops as well.[68] G.M.S.Carter, Assistant Commissioner of Pagyi, was sent with Symons. Carter was given full powers under the Village Regulation and ample magisterial powers, but the ordinary administrative work of the district was reserved to the Deputy Commissioner.[69] At the same time, Lieutenant Herbert Browning, Assistant Commissioner, was sent to Ava as Civil Officer to work with the column under Colonel Walker. Colonel Walker was later on succeeded by Captain Knox.

From the beginning Symons was confronted with a very difficult situation. He wrote that every village without exception, at which there was not a military or police post, and some even of

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[67] As we have seen, Colonel Symons was brought in from India to organise the Mounted Infantry. He appears to have been in the good books of the military authorities both in India and Burma. General White especially held a very high opinion of him. This is clear from his various demi-officials.

[68] Symons was in reality "Military Governor" of Sagaing, GSWP, vol. 5, Letter to F.Roberts, 11 August 1888.

[69] Crosthwaite, op.cit., p.104.

these, paid blackmail to, or harboured one or other of the 'dacoit' gangs.[70] He attributed the failure of the British to make any great impression on the villagers during the past two years to two things. First, there was the want of hereditary and influential headmen of the soil, men who could be made and supported as Myoôks and Thugyis. Secondly, the military operations which had hitherto been undertaken in the district were intermittent. Symons wrote:

> "Our efforts to better matters had hitherto been too spasmodic. Expeditions were got up, flying columns sent out, great energy shown, and then the troops were recalled, and the work relaxed. The people greatly feared this hot and cold policy, and in the beginning of 1888 looked more to their own subsidised bands of dacoits, whom they willingly paid, for protection against other bands, than to the troops and police."[71]

This hot and cold policy had undoubtedly produced a damaging impact on the work of pacification. The people did not learn to rely upon British support. "We could not", continued Symons, "get the touch with/people. They did not believe in us, did not believe that we should remain out with them."[72] It was really a very difficult job for Symons to make people believe that the British meant to protect them and that their true interests lay in helping the British.

Operations began early in March 1888.[73] The scene of operations was bordered on the west by the Chindwin River, on the south and east by the Irrawaddy, and on the north by the Lower Chindwin and

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[70] MLEI, vol. 990, M 5165/1889, p.5, Symons' letter, 4 February 1889.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Ibid., p.6.

[73] Ibid., p.4.

Shwebo districts. In extent it was more than 1,100 square miles and contained a population of about 91,000 souls, scattered in more than 200 villages. The number of bands against whom these operations were undertaken was sixteen, consisting of more than 500 men altogether.[74] These figures go a long way to indicate the difficult nature of Symons' task. The area and the population were too large to easily cover the activity of 500 men. So the key to Symons' success lay in how much co-operation he could get from the villagers. If the villagers were reluctant to co-operate, the only course left was to fine the whole village. In fact, this was done by Symons from the beginning.

> "Throughout these operations", he wrote, "it has been our object to make a whole village responsible for each of its members. For instance, we did not arrest, or punish, the man, or men who actually collected for, or paid to, the dacoits money or food, but fined the whole village instead. We found this plan most effectual. It kept prisoners from the jails, strengthened the village system, and, which is important, was liked and appreciated by the people themselves."[75]

That the plan worked well, there is no doubt. It went a long way to force the half-starved population into submission. But Symons' claim that the plan was liked and appreciated by the people is not acceptable. To the British it might be pragmatism, but to the Burman, it was clearly a harsh measure. From Symons' Report it appears that the villages were sometimes heavily fined by Carter.[76] It seems most unlikely that this kind of measure was

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[74] MLEI, vol. 990, M 5165/1889, p.5, Symons' Letter, 4 February 1889.

[75] Ibid., p.9.

[76] Ibid., p.8. According to the 1890 returns, 457 villages were fined. See BHP, vol. 3809, September 1891 (Police), Statement No. 2, Chief Commissioner's order on the reports of the Commissioners in Upper Burma on the working of the Village Regulation during 1890.

genuinely appreciated by the people. Perhaps a few villagers were interviewed by Symons or Carter. These men might through fear have expressed their satisfaction at this measure.

However, one thing is certain, that the measure of fining a whole village, however effectual it may have proved, was not enough. Symons had to think of a still harsher measure simultaneously. So he asked for special powers which would enable him to deport the relatives of the 'dacoits' to a distant place. He was convinced that this measure would force the Bos to give themselves up. "Nothing", wrote Symons, "is more likely to prove a deterrent to men going out in the future than the knowledge that their relations will be held responsible for them, and will be deported."[77]

Symons made this plan in consultation with Carter and Captain Raikes, the officiating Commissioner of the Central Division. Carter, who made many careful enquiries about the state of the district, wrote to Raikes on 22 March 1888 that the leading Bos lived in the jungle near certain villages with their followers and were fed, subsidised and harboured by the villages. The relatives of the 'dacoits', Carter continued, lived openly in their villages and acted as spies on the movements of the troops and police.[78] Carter was convinced that the nature of the country was such that it was almost impossible for military or police parties to capture them without the co-operation of the villagers. So he thought that the

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[77] MLEI, vol. 990, M 5165/1889, p.6, Symons' Letter, 4 February 1889.

[78] IUBP, vol. 3203 June 1888 (Public), p.94.

best step to enforce the assistance of all villagers to catch these Bos would be to deport the relatives of the Bos.[79]

Captain Raikes held a similar opinion. He himself visited that part of the tract which lay on the west of the Mu River, and personally interviewed Thugyis of all the principal villages in the tract east and west of the Mu. He was also convinced that so long as the villagers chose to harbour the 'dacoits' and to keep them informed of British movements, the 'dacoits' would remain at large, and every attempt to capture them would end in failure. The 'dacoits', Raikes wrote to the Chief Commissioner on 24 March 1888, had established a most perfect system of espionage, so that they could at once inflict summary punishment upon any one who attempted to give information against them.[80] In a subsequent letter to the Chief Commissioner Raikes gave a clear picture of the situation as it existed in March 1888.

> "The people in this tract of country", he wrote, "looked up to these different dacoit Bos as their rightful rulers and upon officers of the British Government as interlopers. This feeling was spreading day by day, and the influence of the dacoit leaders, which had hitherto been unchecked, was gaining ground and becoming a source of danger not only to the Sagaing district, but to other districts in the neighbourhood."[81]

So Captain Raikes was in favour of rigorous measures. He proposed to deport the relatives of the 'dacoits' and to insist upon their surrender by the people of the different villages.[82] Those

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[79] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.95.

[80] Ibid., p.93.

[81] BHP, vol. 3118, August 1888 (Judicial), p.6, Raikes' Letter, 24 July 1888.

[82] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.93, Raikes' Letter of 24 March 1888.

relatives who eluded arrest must under no circumstances be harboured by villagers.[83] If they were harboured, the villagers would be punished under the Village Regulation in the same manner as if they harboured the 'dacoits' themselves.[84] If after their deportation the villagers still failed to render assistance and to give up the 'dacoits' Raikes proposed to punish the villagers by imposition of fines and, if necessary, by the punitive quartering of police in different villages, also by further concentration of villages in the disturbed tract.[85] A draft proclamation was prepared on these lines and submitted to the Chief Commissioner for approval.

Crosthwaite approved the plan of deportation, but he did not like the manner of deportation as proposed by Raikes. Raikes in his draft proclamation proposed that the relatives of the 'dacoits' should be deported to Lower Burma. Furthermore, he did not say anything as to the number of people to be deported. The proclamation simply said that the relatives of all 'dacoit' leaders or members of 'dacoit' gangs would be deported. Presumably this meant a large number of people - men, women and children. Crosthwaite did not want them to be deported to a place as far away as Lower Burma, nor did he want their number to be very numerous. He wrote to Raikes on 4 April 1888:

> "I have several times brought in the wives and families of dacoits with excellent effect. If you

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[83] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), pp. 93-94, Raikes' Letter of 24 March 1888.

[84] Ibid., p.94.

[85] Ibid.

> can, bring them in and put them under surveillance in Ava or elsewhere, if they are not too numerous."[86]

Crosthwaite's anxiety is understandable. The deportation of people to a place as far away as Lower Burma would involve a considerable amount of money. Raikes himself realised this.[87] People would be sent to Lower Burma at government expense; they would be maintained there at government expense and, upon the capture of the Bos related to them, they would be sent back to Upper Burma at government expense. It seemed most unlikely that the Government of India would allow Crosthwaite to incur such expenditure for a matter which could be settled more cheaply, namely, by sending the people to some place in Upper Burma. Apart from this financial side, the deportation of a large number of men, women and children to a place as far away as Lower Burma was a risky undertaking. If anything went wrong, Crosthwaite would be blamed. Moylan, the Times correspondent, was still there. Moylan's reports had already discredited Crosthwaite's rule in the eyes of many Home Politicians. Above all, Lord Cross himself greatly feared The Times.[88] So any unfavourable report on deportation might lead Cross to oust Crosthwaite from Burma.[89]

In addition to the modifications regarding the number and place of deportation, Crosthwaite suggested a few more changes. He suggested that a proclamation might be issued offering terms

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[86] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.19.

[87] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.94, Raikes' Letter to Chief Commissioner, 24 March 1888.

[88] HTWP, vol. 1, Crosthwaite's Letter (private) to White, dated 17 July 1889 (India Office Library, Mss. Eur. E.254).

[89] From Crosthwaite's private Letter to White dated 24 July 1889 it appears that Crosthwaite was always afraid of being thrown over by Lord Cross, ibid.

to such of the followers of the Bos as had not committed murder on condition that they surrendered before a fixed date and gave up their arms. The names of those against whom there were charges of murder could be given in the proclamation and pardon offered to all others. At the same time, Crosthwaite continued, a proclamation might be issued naming all the villages which were known to harbour and aid the gangs, and informing them that unless the members of these gangs who were under the terms of the former proclamation entitled to pardon surrendered, and unless those who were not entitled to pardon were captured or killed before a given date, all the lands of the villages named would be declared Royal lands and would be assessed to revenue at the rate of one-quarter of the produce.[90]

So Raikes modified his Proclamation in the light of Crosthwaite's suggestions. Having assured the Chief Commissioner that the number of persons to be deported would not be very large,[91] he proposed two modifications to his Proclamation: first, the Bos' relatives would be deported to the Upper Chindwin instead of Lower Burma;[92] and secondly, all the lands belonging to the villagers who failed to capture or kill the Bos within one month from the date of issue of the Proclamation would be declared Royal lands and be assessed to revenue at the rate of one quarter of their produce.[93] This second

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[90] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.96, Tel. from the offg. Sec. to the Chief Commissioner to Raikes, 7 April 1888.

[91] Ibid., pp. 97-98, Raikes' Letter, 23 April 1888.

[92] Ibid., p.98.

[93] Ibid., pp. 98-99.

clause was an addition to Raikes' first proclamation. Its inclusion made his final proclamation tougher. However, Crosthwaite approved it, but administered a note of caution:

> "I desire, however, to impress on you the great need of care in deporting relatives of dacoits. The measure must be carried out under section 13, Village Regulation, and, as I have before observed, the deportation of a large number of people is not practicable, both on ground of expense and for other reasons."[94]

The Government of India also approved the Proclamation, but gave a similar note of caution:

> "His Excellency in Council considers it particularly desirable that all orders for deportation, &c. should, so far as possible, be couched in the precise terms of the relevant sections of the Upper Burma Village Regulation, 1887, so that there may be no doubt that action taken under the proclamation is not only within the spirit but also within the letter of the law."[95]

The Proclamation was put into force immediately. But there was always a want of reliable informers without whom the Proclamation could not be used effectually. In fact, very few people were available to do this job, because the risk to the lives of informers was too great. However, Symons managed to get some from among the 'ex-dacoits'. These men formed the nucleus of a body of 'Special Extra Village Police'. The members of this force were drawn from many villages. Their first duty was to go about and get information. They were armed with guns, but when out on detective work, they had to leave their guns at the nearest post. They were partly trained to shoot, and they were employed together as an armed body.[96]

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[94] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.100, Tel. from Chief Commissioner to Raikes, 28 April 1888.

[95] Ibid., p.101, Govt. of India to Chief Commissioner, 15 June 1888.

[96] MLEI, vol. 990, M 5165/1889, p.8, Symons' Letter, 4 February 1889.

Operations in the Sagaing district lasted for eleven months - from March 1888 to January 1889. As the task was basically political in nature, the operations were carried on mainly through the civil power, aided by the unsparing use of mounted bodies of troops and police in following up the bands wherever heard of, by searching for them at all houses by day and night, by following dacoited cattle until recovery, and by sticking to each man and gun in a band until the man or the gun was captured.[97] These persistent efforts were highly successful. Of the sixteen bands, twelve were completely and four partially broken up.[98] Numerous rebels or dacoits were either killed in action or executed after capture or sentenced to various other punishments.[99] About 200 relatives of the 'dacoits' were deported.[100] As soon as these relatives were cleared out of a village, that village more or less came over to the British side and, in many cases, as soon as the relatives were sent off, the Bos related to them surrendered unconditionally with their arms.[101] Thus in Mutha village the relatives were deported, but before they arrived at Alon in the Chindwin district, the 'dacoits' related to them came in and surrendered with their arms.[102]

Similar results were obtained on the Ava side of the district. The relatives of 'dacoits' living in villages within the range of

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[97] MLEI, vol. 990, M 5165/1889, p.7, Symons' Letter, 4 February 1889.

[98] Ibid., p.5.

[99] Ibid., pp. 2, 7.

[100] Ibid., p.7.

[101] Ibid., p.6.

[102] BHP, vol. 3118, August 1888 (Judicial), pp. 8-9, From Carter to Commissioner, Central Division, 27 June 1888.

the gangs and furnishing them with aid and information were removed and this, as Lieutenant Browning reported, had a very good effect in bringing in the 'dacoits'.[103] There were nineteen well known Bos who in April 1888 held the countryside.[104] By August most of them were accounted for. There was some recrudescence of disorder in the cold season of 1888-89. But after May 1889 the subdivision was quiet.[105]

Thus the whole of the Sagaing district was thoroughly dealt with. About the results Thirkell White wrote: "It is a record of excellent field operations work performed with untiring energy and with sound judgement and discretion. The success of the operations has been conspicuous."[106] General Wolseley, Commanding the First Brigade, wrote: "The steady and persistent indifference to hardships and personal comfort displayed by these officers could not fail to imbue all those attached to them with a similar spirit of that incomparable determination to overcome all difficulties."[107]

Symons was transferred from Sagaing at the end of January 1889. But the operations were continued. Symons himself wrote that if vigorous measures were kept up, much might be done in the next few weeks, but that if they were slackened off, it would in the future perhaps lead to trouble.[108] General Wolseley concurred in his views.[109]

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[103] BHP, vol. 3118, August 1888 (Judicial), p.10, from Browning, Asst. Commissioner on Special Duty, to Deputy Commissioner, Sagaing, 16 June 1888.

[104] ARB, 1888-1889, Part I, P.7

[105] Ibid.

[106] MLEI, vol. 990, M 5165/1889, p.2, H.T.White's letter, 6 March 1889.

[107] Ibid., p.4, Wolseley's letter, 13 February 1889. General White also wrote that the results were "quite exceptionally successful". Ibid, p.1, General White's letter of 12 March 1889. Demetrius C. Boulger in his "The Pacification of Burmah" has given a good account of the work of Pacification done by 1889, The National Review, vol.XIII, March to August 1889 (London).

[108] MLEI, vol.990, M.5165/1889, p.10, Symons' letter of 4 February 1889.

[109] Ibid., p.4, Wolseley's letter of 13 February 1889.

So operations were continued. By August 1889 twenty-six Bos, among whom were Nyo U, Nyo Pu, Shwe Yan and Bo Tok, had been killed; twenty-six, including Nga Sawbwa and Min O had been captured.[110]

Operations were also simultaneously undertaken in other districts of Upper Burma on the same lines as in Sagaing. As for Ye-U, the measures taken during 1888 were not entirely successful.[111] The powers conferred by the Village Regulation were worked with energy, though in some cases without caution.[112] Some good was, however, effected by the grouping of villages and the activity of the police.[113] The Regulation was successfully applied in the Lower Chindwin district.[114] But in the Taungdwingyi subdivision it seems to have been injudiciously applied. Consequently, throughout 1888 the subdivision together with Pyinmana was much disturbed.[115] In 1889 General Symons[116] assumed full control over the operations for reducing the district to order. All civil and police officers were placed under Symons' orders. Towards the end of 1889 the most disturbed portion of the Magwe district, formerly Taungdwingyi district, was the Taungdwingyi subdivision. Columns were organised to operate simultaneously in this unsettled tract from Yamethin, Pyinmana, Magwe and Thayetmyo. This began early in December 1889.

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[110] PGLIB, vol. 88, p.3030.

[111] ARB, 1888-1889, Part 1, p.7.

[112] Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[113] Ibid., p.8.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid., p.11.

[116] Symons became Brigadier-General early in 1889.

But these operations did not meet with any marked success. They were resumed on a more systematic plan in February 1890. The result was entirely successful.[117]

In the Pyinmana district the Regulation was successfully enforced in the beginning of 1889. Villages which were known or reasonably believed to harbour 'dacoits' were removed to the neighbourhood of police posts.[118] The leaders retired to the hills. By the middle of 1889 all the large gangs of rebels that had so long opposed the British in the plains had been completely broken up.[119]

In the Minbu district, in 1888 and through the first half of 1889, persistent pressure was brought to bear on the existing gangs by the full exercise of the Village Regulation. Free pardon was offered to all, except certain prominent Bos, who surrendered and gave up their arms within a certain time.[120] The relatives of 'dacoits' were removed from their villages and a fortnightly fine was imposed on all harbouring villages.[121] During 1888, on seventy-three villages a fine of Rs. 5 a house was levied for harbouring Ôktama.[122] The villagers were warned that if they continued to assist Ôktama they would be severely punished.[123] By the middle of 1888

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[117] ARB, 1889-90 (Rangoon 1890), Part 1, p.9.

[118] Ibid., 1888-89, p.12.

[119] Burma Gazetteer: Yamethin District, vol. A, p.40.

[120] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.104. The proclamation of pardon was issued in the Minbu district in April 1888. Only eight persons like Ôktama were excepted by name from the benefit of this proclamation. See BHP, vol. 3574, January 1890 (Judicial), p.8.

[121] BHP, vol. 3354, November 1889 (Police), p.53.

[122] Ibid., vol. 3352, March 1889 (Police), p.58.

[123] IUBP, vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.105.

over 600 rebels gave themselves up.[124] By the middle of 1889 Ôktama himself was captured.[125]

Thus, speaking generally, by the end of 1889 the British were able to clear the plains of Upper Burma from various organised bands of rebels by the vigorous application of the Village Regulation. This success was reflected in the changes which simultaneously took place in the organisation of the police and the army. As to the police,[126] with the collapse of the organised resistance in the plains, the semi-military work of the Indian police was nearly completed. So it became practicable to concentrate the military police. In many places one post was found to be sufficient where two or more had been necessary before. In other places the posts remained, but were held by a smaller number of men, or were handed over to the Burmese civil police. This change can be well understood by the fact that at the end of 1889 the number of posts held by the Indian police was 173 as against 192 at the end of 1888.[127] Generally speaking, towards the end of 1889 the state of several districts in the plains was so satisfactory that the military police were able without risk to afford considerable reductions in their battalions. But these reductions of strength were not made absolute. Instead of finally disbanding the companies which had been

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[124] IUBP., vol. 3203, June 1888 (Public), p.103.

[125] BHP, vol. 3354, November 1889 (Police), p.53.

[126] As we have seen (Chapter Five, p. 234), at the end of 1887 the sanctioned strength of the Indian police was 17,515 of all ranks and the actual strength 13,244. At the end of 1888 these figures rose to 19,177 and 17,880 respectively.

[127] RPAB, 1888, p.23, and 1889, Part III, p.32.

saved, the Chief Commissioner decided to utilise them in the formation of a strong and highly trained reserve.[128] This is why the sanctioned strength at the end of 1889 remained nearly as large as that at the end of 1888.[129]

Furthermore, a process of amalgamating two or more battalions began with the object of reducing the strength and cost of the aggregate force. Thus the Kyaukse, Meiktila, and Yamethin battalions, which aggregated nineteen companies, were formed into a single joint battalion of fifteen companies. Three of the companies reduced by this process were added to the reserve; the fourth company was struck off the strength.[130]

As the military work of the Indian police was nearly completed, the responsibility gradually fell on the indigenous police force which grew in strength. The strength of the Karen police was raised from one company at the end of 1887 to four companies by the middle of 1888.[131] At the end of 1889 the strength of the Karen battalion was 358 men.[132] The Karens proved a very useful force. They worked hard and unceasingly for the long periods they remained out in the jungles hunting the different bands of Ôktama.[133] The strength of the Burmese police was also raised from 6,127 at the end of 1887 to 6,272 at the end of 1888.[134] The rate of increase was not at

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[128] RPAB, 1889, p.4, Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner.

[129] Ibid., 1890, p.11, Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner.

[130] Ibid., 1889, P.5, Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner.

[131] Ibid., 1888, Part III, p.28.

[132] Ibid., 1889, Part III, p.35.

[133] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

[134] Ibid., 1888, Part IV, p.54.

first satisfactory. It appears that recruitment was at first difficult in the remote areas. In the Ruby Mines tract, for example, although double the ordinary pay was given to constables, few men of respectability or intelligence could be induced to take service.[135] However, at the end of 1889, the number was raised to 7,193, an increase of 921[136] as compared with only 145 in the previous year. Every care was taken to increase the efficiency of this force. Systematic training in school had not, owing to excess of work, been found practicable. But they were drilled and disciplined into shape, and both officers and men acquired, through the medium of books supplied to them, and by example and tuition of superior officers, a good deal of knowledge of law and police duties.[137]

As to the army, the troops in Upper Burma ceased to be on the footing of a field force from 1 April 1888, and the number of brigades was reduced from four to three with headquarters at Mandalay, Myingyan, and Meiktila. There were separate commands at Bhamo, Ruby Mines, Chindwin and Shwebo. The aggregate strength of this force was 13,250[138] men as against 20,971 in April 1887. The number was further reduced to 11,335 by the end of March 1889,[139] although General White was strongly against any heavy reduction.[140]

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[135] RPAB, 1889, p.7, Proceedings of the Chief Commissioner.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., 1888, p.56.

[138] ARB, 1888-89, Part II, p.41.

[139] Ibid.

[140] GSWP, vol. 5, demi-officials to Gen. F. Roberts, 11 August 1888: 3 December 1888: 15 February 1889; MLEI, vol. 987, No. 27 of 1889, White's Letter of 15 September 1888, pp. 3-5.

Thus within a year of the operation of the Village Regulation the strength of the Upper Burma garrison was brought almost to the level of the original Expeditionary Force. This shows how rapidly the work of pacification was advancing. From 1 April 1889 this force, together with that in Lower Burma, was formed into the Burma District Command under Major-General B.L.Gordon.[141] The command was brought under the conditions of a first class district of the Madras Presidency with Headquarters at Rangoon. The entire force was distributed under three second class districts with headquarters at Mandalay, Myingyan and Rangoon. The Rangoon command included Meiktila.[142]

The above mentioned changes in the organisation of the police and the army clearly reflected the great success which had been achieved against various organised bands of rebels and dacoits by the full exercise of the Village Regulation of 1887. This does not, however,mean that the work of pacification was almost complete. In fact, there could not be any real pacification unless the success against the rebels was accompanied by a growing willingness on the part of the people to accept British rule. In this connection it is worth noting a few extracts from the reports of the divisional and district authorities written since the middle of 1889.

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[141] Major-General White vacated the command on 1 April 1889.

[142] MLEI, vol. 988, General Order No. 255, 22 March 1889. We have already seen that in April 1889 the Government of India placed the Upper Burma command under the Commander in Chief, Madras Army. Subsequently, an attempt was made to put the command back under the Commander in Chief in India, ibid., vol. 998, M 5827/1890, No. 115 of 1890, p.3. But the Secretary of State did not approve the idea, LP, vol. 3, Letters from Sec. of State, 4 July 1890 and 21 August 1890, pp. 57, 76.

The Deputy Commissioner of Mandalay wrote on 1 July 1889:

"I have quite recently visited a large portion of the Pyinulwin subdivision and of the Madaya and Kutywa townships, and nowhere did I see any distress. The villagers appeared to me to be remarkably happy and contented, and they commented frequently on the abnormal freedom from dacoity and cattle-lifting which they were enjoying."[143]

The Deputy Commissioner of Shwebo wrote on 30 June 1889:

"Dacoity has now almost entirely ceased in this district, and villages which were removed to other sites are being permitted to return. Trade is reviving and cultivation is everywhere being pushed on to the full capacity of the stock of plough-cattle."[144]

The Commissioner of the Central Division wrote on 1 June 1889:

"During a recent tour, extending from the 20th March to the 27th May, I have travelled through all the districts of this division; have visited nearly all the townships and many villages in four of these districts. The crops have been good and cultivation is extending. In nearly all the townships of the division visited during my recent tour I saw evidences of comfort and in parts of affluence. 'Pwes', 'ahlus', and other festivities were going on in all quarters, even where least to be expected."[145]

The Commissioner of the Eastern Division wrote on 8 June 1889:

"There are now no large dacoit gangs in any part of the division. English officers ride all over the Yamethin and Meiktila districts unarmed and without escort of any kind, while in most parts of the Pyinmana district also an escort is unnecessary."[146]

These reports indicate a remarkable change in the overall situation - a change which is not noticeable in any previous report.

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[143] PGLIB, vol. 88, p.3028.

[144] Ibid.

[145] Ibid., p.3030. Pwe = a religious festival, public celebration or entertainment. Ahlu = a religious offering.

[146] Ibid., p.3033.

For the first time the people were not only reported to be enjoying abnormal freedom from dacoity and cattle-lifting, they were also reported to be happy and contented. But these reports cannot, perhaps, be accepted without making a careful examination of the overall situation.

So far as the law and order situation is concerned, things were certainly not as good as the Upper Burma authorities claimed. Throughout the first half of 1889 The Times constantly reported a disturbed situation.[147] Even the Secretary of State was not inclined to think that matters were so quiet there as he could wish.[148] But, at the same time, it is true that since the beginning of 1889 the situation was taking a better turn. Presumably, this was the effect of the vigorous application of the Village Regulation. Thus there was a marked decrease in the number of violent crimes. In 1888 the number of violent crimes was 3,408. In 1889 this number decreased by over 46°/o. The decrease was most marked in violent crimes of the most serious classes. Thus, murders by robbers and dacoits decreased 55°/o, dacoities 53°/o and robberies about 15°/o.[149] In 1890 a further decrease of 70°/o was reported. The proportional decrease in crimes of the most serious classes was remarkable. Thus, murders by robbers and dacoits decreased 74°/o, dacoities 82°/o and robberies 45°/o.[150] By the end of 1890 there was scarcely any district

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[147] The Times, 11 March 1889, p.5; 18 March 1889, p.5; 28 March 1889, p.5; 8 April 1889, p.5; 15 April 1889, p.5; 29 April 1889, p.5; 20 May 1889, p.5.

[148] LP, vol. 2, p.31, Cross to Lansdowne, 29 March 1889.

[149] ARB, 1889-1890, p.23.

[150] Ibid., 1890-1891 (Rangoon 1891), p.26.

in Upper Burma in which serious crime was more prevalent than in an ordinary district in India.[151]

Fielding Hall, who was still in Upper Burma, observed this change. He wrote that for the first time since he crossed the frontier in 1886, he was able to lay aside his revolver and to live beyond the sound of a sentry. There were, he wrote, still occasional 'dacoities' but these were no longer condoned by the country-side.[152] Thus it seems that a change was gradually taking place in the attitude of the people. People who had so long helped the insurgents directly or indirectly began to realise that any further resistance to British authority would be an act of sheer madness. This might be a reason why hundreds of 'dacoits', in spite of there being no general proclamation on the subject of the pardon of outlaws during the first half of 1889, gave themselves up voluntarily. Thus in Minbu, Myingyan and Pakokku alone, the surrender of over 1,300 'dacoits' was recorded since the beginning of 1889.[153] It was, indeed, a great change - a change which was difficult to realise at first. This is clear from Fielding Hall's observation:

> "That we should be able to ride about alone and without arms, that one could go into camp and stay in zayats or little rest-houses without any guard, that our duties were no longer to consist in getting information of enemies, but in organising the revenue and practical administration, required a readjustment of all one's ideas. It seemed in 1886 and 1887 that Burma would never be quiet, but now it was so."[154]

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[151] The Pioneer Mail, 1 January 1891, p.8.

[152] Fielding Hall, A People at School, p.132.

[153] BHP, vol. 3574, January 1890 (Judicial), pp. 7-8.

[154] Fielding Hall, A People at School, pp. 132-133.

This change was reflected in many ways. The people, for instance, began to appreciate the judicial system as established by the British. They found it safer and more convenient to get their disputes settled. Consequently, there was a steady increase in judicial business, both criminal and civil, after 1887. In 1888 the number of criminal cases brought to trial was about 9,000 and that of civil cases instituted more than 34,000. In 1889 the corresponding numbers were about 12,000 and 38,000.[155] The increase in the number of civil cases especially was remarkable; it goes a long way to show how freely the people resorted to the Courts.[156]

The restoration of law and order could also be seen in other spheres. One specific instance can be cited. The extraction of timber from the forests of Upper Burma was one of the most hazardous and risky undertakings in the troubled post-annexation period. As we have already seen,[157] several Europeans were killed in 1886. The work of extracting timber was not, however, stopped because timber was one of the most important export items. So the work was carried on under heavy security arrangements. The quantity of timber of all kinds brought to revenue stations during 1887-88 was more than 98,000 tons. This figure rose to over 162,000 tons during 1888-89 - an increase of about 64,000 tons.[158] Such a vast increase shows how rapidly progress was being made in the restoration of order.

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[155] ARB, 1889-90, pp. 26, 29.

[156] Ibid., 1888-89, Part II, pp. 30-31.

[157] See above, p.131.

[158] ARB, 1888-89, Part II, p.50.

So far as the economic condition of the people is concerned, there was undoubtedly a marked improvement. Trade was reviving fast. A great improvement in the export and import trade via Bhamo with China, the Northern Shan States and the Kachin hills was reported.[159] The statistics of the jade-stone trade during 1888-89 show a considerable improvement compared with 1887-88. India-rubber also was brought down from the Mogaung and Chindwin forests in greater quantities than in 1887-88.[160]

From the Wuntho State paddy, rice, mats, hides, horns and forest produce were brought down by coolies, and salt, salt-fish, betelnuts, jaggery, oil, foreign piece-goods and hardware were taken back in exchange.[161]

Sagaing was the entrepôt of trade in the Central Division. In 1888-89 a great deal of import and export trade in various items was reported through Sagaing.[162] In the case of each item a considerable increase is noticeable. This is undoubtedly remarkable, because for the last three years Sagaing had been one of the most disturbed districts in Upper Burma.

Thus, speaking generally, by mid-1889 a great deal of progress was made towards economic recovery. But this does not mean that economically the people reached a state of contentment. The prosperity of the Burmese people depended to a large extent on agriculture. So the whole issue has to be examined in view of the condition of

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[159] ARB, 1888-89, p.58.

[160] Ibid., p.59.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid., p.60.

agriculture as it had existed during the first three troubled years of annexation. Several things have to be taken into consideration in this connection. First, during that period agriculture was neglected, because anarchy prevailed everywhere. People abandoned their villages and lands. Those who remained in their villages did not dare to risk their plough-cattle and seed-paddy. Thus in the Mandalay district alone some 6,000 acres of land turned into high grass jungle owing to the dacoits and consequent desertion of villages.[163] The Financial Commissioner, D. Smeaton, wrote in 1898 with reference to price rises:

> "From personal recollections of the country in 1887, I am inclined to think that the appalling anarchy which prevailed was the primary cause of the rise. Crops and cattle were alike at the mercy of hundreds of brigands and dacoits. Men did not care to risk seed or cattle; cultivation shrank to subsistence limit, and naturally agricultural produce was at a premium."[164]

Secondly, things became still worse as a result of unfavourable rainfall. Agriculture depended on timely rainfall. Even an irrigated district was not altogether independent of rainfall. It was more or less independent of rain in August and September if there was sufficient canal water to reduce the soil to the condition of liquid mud necessary at transplanting but, however much rain fell in those months, the paddy withered unless there were constant showers in October and November to make the bud burst into ear.[165]

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[163] Burma Gazetteer: Mandalay District, vol. A, p.78; cited from Gibson's original settlement report on the Mandalay district.

[164] SR, Minbu, 1893-97 (Rangoon 1900), Review by the Financial Commissioner, 12 May 1898, p.6.

[165] SR, Kyaukse, 1890-1891 (Rangoon 1892), p.5.

So a timely rainfall, whether for irrigated or unirrigated districts, was the most essential thing in a peasant's life. But the Upper Burmese peasant appears to have been unlucky in this respect. The rainfall was not only irregular as to time, but also as to distribution, being often quite local, so that while one part of the district might be suffering from partial drought another might be receiving more water than it required.[166] Thus it could never be depended upon. It became still more irregular during the first three years of annexation, making the hard lot of the people still harder.

Thirdly, the distress was also aggravated by the cattle disease.[167] Cattle disease was, however, a common phenomenon in Upper Burma; it occurred every year.[168] But in the post-annexation years it became more widespread than ever. Evidently drought and negligence were responsible for this. Between 1887 and 1889 each district appears to have lost a considerable number of cattle. In 1888-89 anthrax was rife in Kyaukpadaung, and about 4,000 cattle died of rinderpest in the Myingyan subdivision alone. In 1889-90 anthrax and rinderpest were again active and over 5,000 deaths were reported from Kyaukpadaung alone.[169] About the same period three townships of the Katha district lost over 6,000 head of cattle, while

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[166] SR, Meiktila, 1896-98 (Rangoon 1900), p.14; SR, Myingyan, 1899-1901, p.6; Michael Adas, The Burma Delta (The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974), p.45.

[167] The Times, 27 May 1889, p.5.

[168] SR, Sagaing, 1893-1900 (Rangoon 1903), p.18; SR, Katha, 1903-1906, p.35; SR, Mandalay, 1892-93 (Rangoon 1894), p.9; SR, Magwe, 1897-1903 (Rangoon 1903), pp. 26-27; SR, Upper Chindwin, 1901-1902 (Rangoon 1903), p.6; Archibald Ross Colquhoun, Amongst the Shans (London 1885), p.281.

[169] SR, Myingyan, p.14.

the Minbu and the Kyaukse districts lost 30,000 and 3,000 respectively.[170] Thus Financial Commissioner Smeaton wrote: "The cattle that had escaped the marauding bands were stricken down in thousands by disease in 1889-90."[171]

Thus the condition of agriculture can be well understood by the factors explained above. Widespread anarchy, irregular rainfall, and disastrous cattle disease made the situation hopeless. As we have already seen,[172] throughout 1887 there was acute food-scarcity in Upper Burma. The people were at the point of starvation. The Special Correspondent of the Rangoon Gazette reported early in 1888:

> "Lately I have visited old scenes and met friends whom I have previously known to be fairly well-to-do, and the change, for the worse, was very marked and pitiable. They had suffered from the unsettled state of the country as they could not work steadily in the fields or outside the villages on account of the risks from dacoits, while owing to the total failure of the early crops this year they were on the verge of starvation. The people looked thin, hungry looking and blacker than usual, and their appearance explained the situation without any complaints from themselves."[173]

This was the general picture. In some isolated parts the situation might be a little better. For instance, in 1887-88 a good agricultural season was reported in Meiktila.[174] But no statistics are available on this point. However, if it is accepted that the situation was comparatively better there, the produce, if viewed in the light of the overall chaotic condition, could not perhaps go beyond meeting

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[170] SR, Minbu, p.14; SR, Kyaukse, p.9.

[171] SR, Minbu, Smeaton's Review, p.7.

[172] See above, pp. 246-247.

[173] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 6 January 1888, p.17.

[174] SR, Meiktila, p.16.

the local needs. So it did not produce any effect on the general situation.

The Government was not, however, indifferent to this pitiable situation. Relief works were started, and import of rice from Lower Burma was stepped up. In 1888 about 151,000 tons of rice were brought in as against a little over 125,000 in 1887.[175] But it seems that a large portion of it was consumed by Government employees, troops and police. The rest was consumed by the well-to-do Burmans. The poor could not buy it because the price was sky-high. In June 1888 the average price of paddy per hundred baskets[176] was within the range of Rs. 125. In some areas, like the Ruby Mines, Yamethin and Taungdwingyi, the price ranged from Rs. 150 to Rs. 200.[177] Compared with the price of paddy, the price of rice must have been nearly double.[178] This was undoubtedly far beyond the reach of the poor. The Rangoon Gazette reported that the construction of the railway and other public works enabled the people to buy rice.[179] Of course,

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[175] ARB, 1888-89, p.45.

[176] The basket was the 9-gallon basket containing about 48 lbs of paddy.

[177] The Rangoon Gazette, 14 August 1888, p.4, Note on Food Supply. The Rangoon Gazette gives district by district the price of paddy in Upper Burma for the period under review. The official reports are notof much assistance in this respect. Most Settlement Officers, however, agreed that there had been a steady increase in price since the reign of King Thibaw. See SR, Minbu, pp. 75-76; SR, Sagaing, p.92; SR, Mandalay, pp. 27, 38; SR, Kyaukse, p.28.

[178] The total quantity of paddy per hundred baskets was about 4,800 lbs = about 48 lbs per basket. A little over 3,000 lbs of husked paddy (rice) could be obtained out of this. Then there was the cost of husking.

[179] The Rangoon Gazette, 21 December 1888, p.5.

these works regularly provided some of the able-bodied men and women with a certain amount of hard cash. But out of this money how much they could spare for rice is questionable. Certainly their wages did not keep pace with the rising prices. They had to buy other necessities of life. And they had to pay taxes regularly. Under the shadow of the punitive Village Regulation, failure to pay taxes appears to have been a risky thing.[180] The whole village might be penalised. Again, these construction works were mostly confined within the urban areas. The bulk of the people who lived in the rural areas had little or no opportunity to participate in them. These were the people who suffered most during those terrible years. Under the situation indebtedness was likely to be a common phenomenon. It is not known how many people were in debt during the period under review. From the Reports on the settlement operations which were undertaken in various districts of Upper Burma in the nineties it appears that a considerable number of people in each district was in debt. Thus in Meiktila more than two thousand families were examined on this point. Only 25°/o declared that they were free from debt.[181] In Sagaing eleven thousand families were examined. Of the agricultural families 44°/o, and of the non-agricultural 30°/o, were in debt.[182] This must have been the legacy

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[180] It seems that in spite of economic hardships the people had to meet the revenue demands regularly. The revenue collected during 1888-89 was Rs. 73,45,435 as against Rs. 50,16,360 in 1887-88, PGLIB, vol. 88, p.3034.

[181] SR, Meiktila, p.27.

[182] SR, Sagaing, Note by the Financial Commissioner, p.2. See also SR, Myingyan, pp. 19-20; SR, Yamethin, 1898-1901 (Rangoon, 1902), p.13.

of the period under review. The reason is that although the country began to recover after 1889, in 1890-91 the country was once again under famine situation so that the money which was borrowed before 1889 was hardly repaid. This is why, as Laurie wrote about the people in the rural parts of the Mandalay district during 1892-1893,

> "luxuries had to be dispensed with. Silk clothes were disposed of and very little betel or tobacco was consumed. Not more than one or two men in each village could afford to buy the piece of meat or fish that a Burman occasionally eats when he has a little money to spare. The people were in general in the poorer tracts living almost on the margin of subsistence."[183]

If this was the situation in the Mandalay district, that in other districts can be easily imagined.

Thus the construction of the railway and other public works did not help the people of the rural areas much. In August 1888 the average price of paddy per hundred baskets was almost the same as that in June. But in the Ruby Mines district there was a 10% increase over the June price.[184] Towards the end of the year the price prospects looked worse owing to the deficiency of the rainfall at the end of October and the beginning of November.[185]

Such was the condition of agriculture during the period 1887-89. It clearly shows that the people who were on the verge of starvation at the end of 1888 could not have reached the stage of happiness and contentment in the middle of 1889. But it is also true that things were taking a better turn about this time because of the

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[183] SR, Mandalay, p.18.

[184] The Rangoon Gazette, 11 September 1888, p.20, Note on Food Supply.

[185] The Times, 12 November 1888.

change which had taken place in the attitude of the people. Trade was reviving, agriculture was being pushed on; and revenue was coming in faster than ever. The price prospects also looked much better.[186] In March 1889 the average price of paddy per hundred baskets was within the range of Rs. 82, showing a sharp fall - over 34°/o. - below the June or August 1888 price.[187]

Thus after the middle of 1889 the pacification of Upper Burma, both from the civil and military point of view, was well in sight. This was no doubt a remarkable achievement of Sir Charles Crosthwaite.[188] But the measures by which this success was achieved are open to criticism both on moral and legal grounds. The fining of a whole village, sometimes heavily, was undoubtedly a very severe measure. This must have aggravated the wounds already caused by the past years' fighting and resultant economic hardships. Furthermore, the deportation of men, women and children and the moving of villages were also severe measures. They caused unspeakable suffering to the people. Crosthwaite himself admitted in his letters to Thirkell White that there had been some injudicious moving of villages and some neglect of the deported people.[189]

As to deportation, large numbers of persons unconvicted of any offence, and indeed untried, were forcibly deported to distant places. Their only fault was that some of their relatives were outlaws. Of course, the Government did not intend to cause any hardship

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[186] The Rangoon Gazette, 15 February 1889, p.4.

[187] Ibid., 19 April 1889, p.17, Note on Food Supply.

[188] The Rangoon Gazette seems to have been very unkind to Crosthwaite. It reported in May 1889: "The lamentable failure of Sir Charles Crosthwaite to pacify Upper Burma, and the discontent and distress prevailing there, are attracting much attention in England." The Rangoon Gazette, 21 May 1889, p.12.

[189] HTWP, vol. 1, Crosthwaite's letters to H.T.White, dated 17 and 24 July 1889.

to those innocent people. Their intention was to remove those people to a distant place where they would be unable to assist their rebel friends and relatives.[190] As these people were innocent, it was the Government's responsibility to look after them properly. But it seems that some over-zealous officers who were in charge of deportation failed to discharge such responsibility. Thus the Deputy Commissioner of the Upper Chindwin wrote in his diary about a batch of 'relatives' who arrived at Kindat on their way to the Kubo Valley that these people were treated like ordinary prisoners. Some of the men, he wrote, had leg-irons on and all the rest were hand-cuffed. The Deputy Commissioner felt sorry for these wretched souls, especially because some of them were old women who could not possibly earn a livelihood.[191]

When Captain Raikes, the Commissioner of the Central Division, came to know this he reacted sharply. He wrote to the Deputy Commissioner of the Upper Chindwin on 12 August 1888 that this was entirely against orders and that the Deputy Commissioner should be careful to see that persons ordered to move under the Regulation were not hand-cuffed or placed in irons in future.[192]

But the mischief had already been done. The strain of the journey together with the bad treatment had caused considerable damage

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[190] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.25, The Chief Commissioner's Resolution of 29 March 1889.

[191] Ibid., p.22. The Rangoon Gazette reported on 28 May 1889: "It is a heart-rending sight to see thirty or forty wretched Burmans, chiefly old men, women and children, being dragged from their villages, and despatched to a distant and pestilential valley."

[192] Ibid.

to the health of these people.[193] The result was that many of them could not stand the extremely unhealthy climate of the Kubo Valley and died within a short time. In 1888, 109 persons were ordered to remove from the Sagaing district to the Kubo Valley and 116 to Kindat. Thirty-eight persons were also sent to the Kubo Valley from the Lower Chindwin district. Of the persons sent to the Kubo Valley, twenty-eight were reported to have died. The Chief Commissioner admitted that the climate of the Kubo Valley had proved unhealthy for persons sent there from other districts. The Chief Commissioner did not, however, forget to mention that when the removal of the relatives to the Kubo Valley was planned, neither Captain Raikes nor he was aware that the climate of the place would prove injurious to the persons concerned. The Valley, he continued, was selected because it was a remote place from which the persons removed would be unable to maintain communication with their relatives in Sagaing.[194]

Perhaps the authorities were not aware of the true nature of the Kubo Valley climate. But if proper care was taken regarding the housing and maintenance of these persons after their arrival in the Valley some lives might have perhaps been saved. Although no specific orders for taking such care were given to the Commissioners and the Deputy Commissioners until the middle of 1889,[195] it was

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[193] From the Diary of Ross, the Deputy Commissioner of the Upper Chindwin, we also know that one old man had died before the party reached Kindat, ibid.

[194] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.22, Chief Commissioner's letter of 6 September 1889.

[195] Ibid., vol. 3353, June 1889 (Police), p.17.

expected that the local authorities would use discretion and judgement in this matter. Of course, the local authorities were handicapped by certain practical difficulties. First, the province was from the beginning under-staffed. Secondly, many inexperienced officers were employed in responsible positions, as suitable officers were not available. Thirdly, during 1888, the Commissioner of the Central Division and the Deputy Commissioner of the Upper Chindwin were much occupied by the outbreak of disturbances which threatened to be serious in the State of Kale. In May 1888 the Tashôn Chins descended into the plains and carried off the pro-British Kale Sawbwa. The Sawbwa was released only after he had promised to assist the Shwegyobyu Prince who was then living among the Chins. This action on the part of the Tashôn Chins appears to have encouraged other Chin tribes.[196] Raids occurred then and later in the year in the State of Kale and in the Kubo Valley. All these might to a great extent account for any failure there may have been to make suitable arrangements for the persons deported to the Kubo Valley.

But these difficulties were already there when the plan of deportation was executed. So the Government were well aware of the circumstances under which they put their plan into operation. The Government should have made special arrangements, especially when the lives of many innocent people were involved. It was the responsibility of the Government to see them well and alive. In fact, the Chief Commissioner was anxious to see that the powers conferred

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[196] The Times, 10 May 1888, p.5; 20 June, 1888, p.7.

by section 13 of the Village Regulation were judiciously exercised by the local authorities under the close personal supervision of the Commissioners of Divisions. In March 1888 the Deputy Commissioners were directed to record a brief order giving their reasons whenever they directed any person to remove under section 13 of the Regulation and to send a copy of the order to the Commissioner for his information. Thus, although the Deputy Commissioners were given full power so that they might in the then state of the province act with promptness and efficacy, their action was not left without control. The Chief Commissioner "thought that Commissioners of Divisions whose charges are not so large as to prevent that close personal supervision which the head of this province cannot possibly give, might be trusted to see that the powers conferred by the Regulation were exercised with discretion and judgement".[197] Thus the Chief Commissioner depended much on the Commissioners. But he was disappointed. He admitted that "this confidence was not entirely justified."[198]

So in June 1889, on account of the mismanagement in connection with the removal of the relatives of the 'dacoits' to the Kubo Valley, the Chief Commissioner issued further instructions and took into his own hands the supervision of the action of Deputy Commissioners in this matter. Orders were accordingly issued forbidding Deputy Commissioners to take action under section 13 of the Regulation without the Commissioner's previous sanction, and prohibiting the removal of any persons to places other than the

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[197] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p24, Chief Commissioner's letter of 6 September 1889.

[198] Ibid.

headquarters of a district or of a subdivision. Commissioners were directed to see that proper arrangements were made for the conveyance, house accommodation, and support of persons removed.[199]

The grouping of villages appears to have caused more sufferings than the deportation. While the latter was a special measure involving selected persons, the former was of a general nature and affected almost every disaffected area. The idea behind this measure was to group small and scattered hamlets near police posts or in the vicinity of large villages so that the 'dacoits' might not use them as a basis of supply and as places of refuge and shelter. Thus the following orders were given to Commissioners in Upper Burma on 16 November 1887 with reference to section 13 of the Regulation:

> "Section 13 - The provisions of this section should be put into operation in order to group small villages which are evidently used by dacoits as a basis of supply and as places of refuge and shelter. It may be presumed that men who prefer to live outside the pale of protection and exposed to the ravages of dacoits are abetting them. The inhabitants of such small villages should accordingly be moved in, under section 13, to some village where they will be unable to render assistance to outlaws."[200]

This was a kind of measure which if applied without caution was likely to cause a great deal of hardship and inconvenience to the persons concerned. In fact, in some districts it was applied without caution. Crosthwaite himself admitted this. He wrote that in some districts - especially in the Ye-U, Sagaing, Magwe and Shwebo districts - the removal of villages had been carried out

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[199] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.24; vol. 3353, June 1889 (Police), p.13, Circular to Commissioners, 11 June 1889.

[200] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

on a more extensive scale than he intended.[201] Thus in the Shwebo district 382 villages containing approximately 9,408 houses were moved by the Deputy Commissioner's order.[202] In the Ye-U district, Deputy Commissioner Houghton, an officer of small experience, issued a circular to all Myoôks on 4 December 1888 to the effect that no village of less than twenty houses would be permitted to exist and that all such villages must be called into the larger ones.[203] Houghton was convinced that this measure would not only render it difficult for the 'dacoits' to attack the people of the villages thus grouped, it would also render it difficult for any of those villages to furnish 'dacoits' with food.[204] Houghton went further than this. Having called in the small villages, he in a subsequent order directed the Myoôks to see that the inhabitants of the combined villages made a really strong stockade of thorn bush or bamboos round the entire village and constructed a watch-place at the gate of the village.[205]

These additional precautionary measures were quite practical, no doubt. But Houghton's action of breaking up all the small villages of less than twenty houses was very sweeping. The Commissioner of the Central Division, E.S.Symes, disapproved of this action. He wrote to Houghton:

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[201] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.25.

[202] Ibid., vol. 3574, February 1890 (Police), p.25. Many villages voluntarily moved to safer places. Thus in the Shwebo district 24 villages, containing 421 houses, moved to different sites of their choice.

[203] Ibid., vol. 3352, March 1889 (Police), p.37.

[204] Ibid., pp. 35-36.

[205] Ibid., p.37.

> "I fear that in sanctioning, as you appear to have done, the removal to new sites of some 6,000 houses, you may have caused a greater amount of hardship and inconvenience than you realize, or than was justified by the circumstances of the case."[206]

The Chief Commissioner also regretted that Houghton took action of so general a nature under section 13 of the Village Regulation.[207]

In fact, these forced removals entailed a considerable hardship and loss to the people. In areas close to the old frontier the people were reported to be escaping to Lower Burma in great numbers.[208] The result was that a considerable area along the old frontier was steadily being depopulated.[209] The subdivision of Taungdwingyi appears to have been especially disturbed. There a large number of villages, the inhabitants of which were for generations devoted to sericulture and silk manufacture, were forcibly broken up, and the people were transferred to another district, where such industries were impossible.[210]

Thus the measure of grouping small villages having been indiscriminately applied proved disastrous. The Mandalay Herald reported that there had been an unjustifiable amount of real and avoidable distress caused by the absolutely unaccountable policy of the grouping of villages. Village populations were expelled from their old centres of life and forced to go to some other spot

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[206] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.38.

[207] Ibid., p.39.

[208] The Times, 27 May 1889, p.5.

[209] The Times, 3 June 1889, p.5.

[210] The Times, 17 June 1889, p.5.

or locality, without the slightest regard being paid to the loss of livelihood that followed from such arbitrary changes. Villagers, the Herald continued, who for generations depended on certain occupations, which the locality of their old sites enabled them to follow, had been removed to places where the pursuit of any occupation by which they could earn their bread was rendered impossible.[211]

The Rangoon Gazette reported that the people, who were being forced to leave the smaller villages and thus deprived of their means of livelihood, were coming down to Lower Burma by thousands; for between the devil of dacoity, and the deep sea of a paternal Government's action in Upper Burma, living they could get none.[212]

The Times gave a similar report. It said that incalculable mischief was done by the feeling of despair and exasperation engendered among the people by the small villages being forcibly broken up, and the inhabitants removed to larger villages, so that their valuable trees and produce-giving fields had to be abandoned, or resorted to from long distances.[213]

The Government did not intend to cause unnecessary suffering to the villagers. Their intention is clear from the Chief Commissioner's Resolution of 29 March 1889. It said:

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[211] The Rangoon Gazette, 28 May 1889, p.14.

[212] Ibid., p.13.

[213] The Times, 24 June 1889 , p.5.

> "It is necessary to point out that the indiscriminate use of the extensive power conferred by the section [137] under reference must be avoided. Anything like a general order for the removal of a number of villages cannot fail to be attended with much hardship to the people and is, moreover, not justified by the law."[214]

In a subsequent order to the Commissioner of the Central Division dated 9 May 1889 the Chief Commissioner directed that great care should be taken not to interfere more than was absolutely necessary, and not to place any hindrances in the way of cultivating the land.[215]

But a measure of this kind could not be resorted to without inflicting considerable suffering and loss. Lord Lansdowne admitted this in a letter to Lord Cross dated 9 August 1889.[216] When the Burmese Kings changed their capital from one place to another they caused considerable suffering and loss to the people. Amarapura was founded in 1783 by King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) who moved the capital to this place from Ava. Sangermano who went to Amarapura in that year observed how the inhabitants of Ava were "compelled to quit their home with all its comforts, and exchange a delightful situation, salubrious in its air and its waters, for a spot infected with fevers and other complaints, from the stagnant waters that surround it."[217] Gouger, who arrived at Amarapura in 1822, observed how King Bagyidaw's action of moving the capital back to Ava in 1823 was the source of ruinous loss and discomfort to the people. "It was", Gouger wrote, "melancholy to see them breaking

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[214] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.25.

[215] Ibid., vol. 3353, July 1889 (Police), p.12. As the country became settled, villages were allowed to return totheir former sites. Thus, by September 1889, 152 villages in the Shwebo district had returned to their old sites. See BHP, vol. 3574, February 1890 (Police), p.25.

[216] LP, vol. 2, p.122.

[217] Sangermano, A Description of the Burmese Empire (Rome 1833), p.55.

up their old habitations and seeking new ones at great cost and labour."[218] Similar distress and discomfort were caused to the people when King Mindon founded Mandalay in 1857.[219] Thus the shifting of the people from one place to another was always the source of great distress and discomfort, whether it was ordered by a Burmese King or by a British Chief Commissioner. But it cannot perhaps be denied that the intensity of suffering could be greatly reduced if the shifting of the people was carried out with utmost caution.

Apart from the moral grounds, the removal of villages can also be criticised on legal grounds. Section 13 of the Regulation of 1887 authorised the Deputy Commissioner to remove any undesirable person from a village, it did not authorise him to remove whole villages. So the measure did not have any legal basis. Crosthwaite himself admitted this in a private letter to Thirkell White. But he took this measure because he thought that it was necessary to deal with the situation effectually.[220] So he tried to find some justification of his action in section 13 of the Regulation. In his letter of September 1889 he argued that the presence of small villages, incapable of self-defence and far from the protection afforded by police posts, rendered possible the existence of 'dacoit'gangs which would otherwise be unable to procure means of

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[218] Gouger, Personal Narrative of Two Years' Imprisonment in Burmah (London 1860), pp. 25-26.

[219] Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, vol. 1, Part 1, pp. 43-44. After Bagyidaw, King Tharrawaddy (1837-1846) made Amarapura his capital after a brief residence at Kyaukmyaung, and no further change was made until 1857 when Mindon (1853-1878) founded Mandalay and ordered the population of Amarapura to move to the new place.

[220] HTWP, vol. 1, Crosthwaite's Letter to White, 11 August 1888.

subsistence. It was, he continued, an established fact that small villages of that description provided food for 'dacoit' gangs in their neighbourhood. So the removal of any village which existed under such conditions that its existence was dependent on the forbearance of 'dacoit' gangs in its neighbourhood was, according to Crosthwaite, clearly justifiable and legal.[221]

But Lord Cross, the Secretary of State, did not think that the action could be justified with reference to section 13 of the Regulation of 1887. He admitted that what Crosthwaite had done was necessary and proved to be of great advantage not only to the country, but also to the persons removed. But he seems to have been inclined to justify the action in view of the pragmatic considerations of the situation. He wrote: "The real justification must rest in the state of anarchy that then existed, salus populi suprema lex."[222]

Lord Lansdowne agreed with Cross, but he found some justification for Crosthwaite's action in section 13 of the Regulation of 1887. He wrote to Cross:

> "It may no doubt be contended with some plausibility that, if the law enables you to remove a number of individuals suspected of harbouring, aiding, and abetting dacoits, &c., you have a right to remove the whole of the population of a small village in which dacoits have been systematically harboured, aided, or abetted. It would probably, however, be better, as you have suggested, to justify the practice with reference to salus populi."[223]

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[221] BHP, vol. 3354, September 1889 (Police), p.25.

[222] LP, vol. 3, p.35, Cross to Lansdowne, 25 April 1890.

[223] Ibid., p.36.

Thus neither on moral grounds nor on legal grounds could the measure of removing villages be justified. It is pragmatism alone in which one can find some justification. The British meant to stay in Upper Burma. So they wanted to pacify the country at any cost. During the first two years their attitude towards the people was on the whole conciliatory. But this attitude gradually changed as the situation grew more and more desperate. They became convinced that only by stern measures could the situation be effectually dealt with. So the punitive provisions of the Regulation of 1887 were vigorously applied. The results were highly successful. Except for some disturbances in the tribal areas, the pacification of Upper Burma was virtually complete by 1890.

CONCLUSION

The pacification of Upper Burma proper was virtually complete by the end of 1890. Thus Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1842-1902), Crosthwaite's successor, wrote in his summary of the Administration Report of Burma for 1890-1891:

> "Upper Burma proper being now perfectly tranquil, it is not necessary to describe separately the progress made in the pacification of each district. The fact that there were fewer violent crimes in Upper than in Lower Burma during the year is sufficient proof that except in certain frontier tracts the work is complete."[1]

From Mackenzie's statement we see that certain frontier tracts were still disturbed. These were the tracts of the Kachins and Chins along the borders with China and India. They belonged to Upper Burma, but not to what we call 'Upper Burma proper'. The British policy between 1886 and 1889 had been to pacify Upper Burma proper without interfering, as far as possible, with the tribes living along the frontiers. The idea was that once the plains were brought under control the subjugation of the tribes, if necessary, was only a question of time. In fact, the British did not want direct military involvement with these tribes living in almost impenetrable tracts situated so far away from the main centres of political and military activity. So these tribes were left to themselves. During the first two years of occupation they did not appear to pose any threat to the British position in the plains. But from 1888 they began to give trouble. They made frequent raids into the peripheries of the plains. These were not ordinary raids characteristic of tribal

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[1] ARB, 1890-1891 (Rangoon 1891), Para. 4, p.3.

instinct. The presence of two fugitive princes among them - the Shwegyobyu Prince among the Chins and the elder Choungwa Prince, Saw Yan Naing,[2] among the Kachins - made it quite clear to the British that these tribal raids had a political motive behind them. But the British could not take any serious action against them, as they were much pre-occupied with the task of implementing the Village Regulation of 1887 in the plains. Moreover, during this period there was a strong possibility that the Myingun Prince might arrive in Burma and with the support of some influential Shan Sawbwas make a serious attempt to expel the British. As we have seen,[3] in 1886 the Prince came as far as Saigon in the French steamer Tibre. In 1888 it was expected, perhaps in view of the tribal upsurge, that the Prince would make another attempt in August that year. So adequate precautions were taken on every occasion of the Tibre's arrival at Colombo.[4] Although nothing happened in August, the anxiety of the British did not subside.

Thus, with the plains still unsettled, and with the Myingun Prince knocking at the door, the British could not take the risk of sending troops to the frontier tracts and thus opening up new, and, perhaps, so far as the terrain was concerned, the most difficult fronts

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[2] As we have seen (p. 256), Saw Yan Naing and his younger brother Saw Yan Baing had given a great deal of trouble to the British in the Ava district in 1886. The latter was separated from his brother towards the end of 1886. He tried to organise a rebellion in Mandalay in January 1887 with the help of many influential people including some pongyis. But the plot failed as the police rushed the house where the conspirators were taking an oath. The Prince, together with 22 other men, was arrested. The Prince was sent to school in Rangoon. See BIP, vol. 3582A, January 1887 (Foreign), pp. 30-31, 34.

[3] See above, p.184.

[4] HC, vol. 111, pp. 222-223.

ever. Towards the end of 1889, as the plains became settled by the vigorous application of the Village Regulation and Myingun's attempt to get into Burma failed,[5] the British obtained a free hand to deal with the tribal situation. Operations were undertaken, which continued through 1890.[6] But the good results produced by these operations were not consolidated so that in the beginning of 1891 the situation in the frontier tracts once again deteriorated. The impact of this was also felt in the peripheries of the plains. Thus a large portion of the Bhamo district was disturbed because of frequent raids by the Kachins.[7] The trade route between Bhamo and Yunnan was reported to be disturbed seriously.[8] To the south-west of Bhamo, the State of Wuntho, taking advantage of the tribal upsurge, broke off its allegiance to the British, and Wuntho men burnt down two military posts and destroyed the telegraph office in an attack on Kawlin.[9] Farther west and north-west, a large

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[5] In October 1889 the Myingun Prince, disguised as a coolie deck-passenger, came down in the Tibre to Colombo and was transferred to the French steamer Djemna, then lying in Colombo Harbour and bound for Singapore and Saigon. The Governor of the Straits Settlements was asked to be on the watch on the arrival of the Djemna at Singapore. But in spite of every endeavour the Prince managed to evade detection and landed in Saigon on 18 October. He was, however, interned at Saigon by the French authorities. See HC, vol. 297, pp. 709, 955, 989, 1395, 1399; vol. 298, pp. 217-219, 710.

[6] MLEI, vol. 999, M 7471, pp. 4-15; vol. 996, M 3138, pp. 2, 8; vol. 1005, Report on the conduct of operations of the Tonhon Expeditionary Force.

[7] The Times, 9 March 1891, p.5.

[8] The Times, 11 April 1891, p.7.

[9] The Times, 20 February 1891, p.3.

portion of the Upper Chindwin district also appears to have been disturbed.[10] Thus the situation was really bad, and in the first few months of his take over Mackenzie had to employ nearly 6,000 men to deal with the situation.[11]

This state of affairs may lead one to the conclusion that the pacification of Upper Burma was not as complete as Mackenzie claimed. But it would be wrong to judge the work of pacification done so far in the plains by the situation in the frontier tracts.[12] It should be judged by the reaction of the Burmese plainsmen to that situation. The success of the tribal upsurge depended on a simultaneous rising in the plains. But such a rising, in spite of the Shwegyobyu Prince's efforts in that direction,[13] never occurred. The plainsmen remained quiet and, in fact, from the latter half of 1889 they began to feel the reality of British power. The Village Regulation was highly successful. The organised bands of rebels were all broken up, and the British position, as we have already seen,[14]

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[10] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 14 March 1891, p.1.

[11] The Times, 18 May 1891, p.5.

[12] Dorothy Woodman seems to be the only modern scholar who has viewed the subject of the pacification of Upper Burma in the light of the situation in the frontier tracts. Her account of "Resistance in Upper Burma" is entirely devoted to the situation in the frontier tracts and British efforts to cope with that situation. She has made no attempt to analyse the situation in the plains with reference to the main objective of British policy. See The Making of Burma (London 1962), pp. 335-452.

[13] MLEI, vol. 995, No. 5 of 7 January 1889, Eyre's letter.

[14] See above, pp. 297-300.

was reflected in many ways - in the steadily decreasing number of violent crimes in the growing interest of the people to resort to the courts to get their disputes settled, in the increasing quantity of timber of all kinds brought to revenue stations and so on. After summarising the law and order situation in Upper Burma proper, the Pioneer Mail wrote that the pacification of Upper Burma was real and complete and that there was no fear of any rising on a large scale.[15]

The Rangoon Gazette gave a similar report. It wrote:

> "The large bands which harried districts are all broken up and dispersed, except perhaps, one or two who find refuge in neighbouring, semi-independent, and ill-governed States; and a considerable number of the violent crimes which do occur still are merely petty robberies, from which the best governed and oldest countries are never quite free. Violent crime in Upper Burma is fast becoming a mere police affair; one sub-division in Shwebo has been taken over entirely by the Civil Police, though a year ago, or thereabouts, this district was harried by large bands, sometimes mustering a hundred men, when a raid was on hand..."[16]

The Times reported in December 1890:

> "Upper Burma proper, as distinguished from its frontier tracts, is now as quiet and as safe as many provinces of India. The people have settled down. Farmers who had emigrated to Lower Burma are coming back; cultivation is spreading."[17]

In this context The Times' report seems to have a special significance. Ever since the occupation of Mandalay Moylan, The Times' Correspondent, who was extremely critical of British actions in Burma, had frequently sent in reports of a disturbed situation in Upper Burma proper. Moylan was still there, but from 1890 his reports were mainly concerned with the operations against the Chins and the Kachins and against

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[15] The Pioneer Mail, 1 January 1891, p.8.

[16] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 18 March 1891, p.7.

[17] The Times, 23 December 1890, p.5.

Wuntho. Some sporadic cases of disturbances continued to occur in the plains, no doubt. The organised bands of rebels were all broken up, but scores of individual members, who had not yet been settled, were moving about the countryside in small batches. Although the growing vigilance on the part of the authorities and the villagers reduced the number of crimes, occasional confrontation with these men was unavoidable. It was, indeed, a question of time when the country would be brought back to the level of peace time normalcy. After all, 'pacification', in the context of the war of annexation, was not an end in itself, it was a means to achieve the end. The end was to introduce an orderly administration which guaranteed security of life and property and economic stability. This to a large extent depended on the loyalty and the willing co-operation of the people concerned. Pacification aimed at achieving such loyalty and co-operation and thus prepared the ground for the introduction of that orderly administration. Some disturbances were bound to continue to occur. But these it was hoped would fade away gradually as the work of reconstruction advanced. So, much was to depend on the tact of the later administrators. In this connection a passage from Crosthwaite's Minute of October 1890 is worth noting. Crosthwaite wrote with reference to the good results of the Village Regulation of 1887

> "I think that most officers will now admit that the policy of dealing with the people by villages and not by individuals has been a very powerful instrument for suppressing disorder and establishing our authority... If we are to rule the country cheaply and efficiently, and to keep the people from being robbed and oppressed by the criminal classes, the village system must be maintained in vigour."[18]

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[18] Upper Burma Village Manual (Rangoon 1896), p.13.

Thus although Crosthwaite believed at the time of his departure from Burma in December 1890 that the work of pacification was virtually complete,[19] he knew that the building up of an efficient machinery of administration depended on the extent to which the good results achieved by 1890 were followed up by later administrators.

Thus from the above discussion we see that the pacification of Upper Burma was really complete by 1890. The plains were so firmly held by the British that the tribal upsurge and the resultant disturbances in certain areas on the peripheries of the plains did not affect that work at all. There was really no possibility of any rising on a large scale, as the Pioneer Mail reported. This was decisively proved by the people's attitude amidst severe food scarcity which occurred during 1891 and 1892. In 1891 the crop failed partially in several districts of Upper Burma and there was a severe cattle disease. The situation was however saved by importing considerable quantities of food from Lower Burma and from other districts of Upper Burma.[20] But in 1892, when the country was yet to recover from the effect of the 1891 drought, a complete failure of crops brought the country almost to the point of starvation.[21] Relief works were opened, large sums were advanced to agriculturalists, extensive reductions of thathameda or house tax

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[19] Sir Charles Crosthwaite, The Pacification of Burma (London 1912), pp. 340-341.

[20] ARB, 1890-1891 (Rangoon 1891), pp. 45-46.

[21] The rainfall of 1891-1892 throughout the dry zone was either far below the average or badly distributed. Thus in the Minbu district it was only two-thirds of an inch in 1891, and only 1.63 inches in 1892. See ARB, 1891-1892 (Rangoon 1892), p.54; SR, Minbu, 1893-1897 (Rangoon 1900), Financial Commissioner's Review, 12 May 1898, p.3.

were made and, in some areas, famine wages were introduced in order to prevent emigration.[22]

Thus the year 1891-1892 was a period of heavy liability for the British Government. The total expenditure incurred on famine relief up to the end of 1891-1892 was Rs. 10,11,275, the total remission or suspension of revenue granted was Rs. 7,84,600, and the total amount of agricultural advances made was Rs. 4,11,558.[23]

These figures show how badly the country was hit by the famine in 1891-92. But in spite of the distress the country remained quiet. This was quite contrary to the expectation of the Government. The Government had expected that robberies for food would be frequent. But this did not happen. Although ordinary thefts slightly increased, the number of violent crimes continued to decrease.[24] There was hardly any serious disturbance during this crisis. According to the Administration Report of Burma for 1891-1892:

> "The attitude of the people under their trials was excellent. They resorted readily to relief works, lent themselves at once to all arrangements made for their organization into working gangs, and preserved throughout the famine that cheerful and contented demeanour which is characteristic of the Burman."[25]

Thus a change had taken place in the attitude of the people. They realised that violence would only result in sufferings. The British did not fail to understand this changing attitude. This is proved by the fact that in the Ye-U district some 1,200 surrendered

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[22] SR, Minbu, p.12; SR, Meiktila, 1896-1898 (Rangoon 1900), pp. 13-14; SR, Sagaing, 1893-1900 (Rangoon 1903), pp. 23, 25; Burma Gazetteer: Shwebo District (Rangoon 1929), vol. A, p.142; Burma Gazetteer: Lower Chindwin District (Rangoon 1912), p.149; Burma Gazetteer: Pakokku District (Rangoon 1913), vol. A, pp. 80-81.

[23] ARB, 1891-1892, p.54.

[24] Ibid., p.30.

[25] Ibid., p.54.

'dacoits' were allowed to live at large on security and under surveillance.[26] This was undoubtedly a bold step, especially at a time when the country was passing through severe food crisis.

This change had begun in 1889. As we have already seen,[27] Fielding Hall spoke of this change in the beginning of 1890. This was corroborated by Laurie in 1892-1893. He called this change a 'revolution'. He wrote:

> "Formerly the sympathies of many of the villages were openly enlisted on the side of the dacoits. Young men from these villages committed an occasional dacoity as a matter of business and routine, and the institution was too well established to be broken except by organized force ..... Repressive measures have altered the status of the dacoit, who is now regarded, in this district at any rate /Mandalay/, as belonging to the lowest class of criminals. Periods of drought have happened before within the memory of men still living, but there has never been a period when property and life were so secure. The fact is thoroughly and gratefully appreciated by Burmans."[28]

Indeed, the Burmans did not fail to understand that the new regime was far more capable than their own rulers of securing life and property against traditional banditry. This may have been an important reason why their attitude towards the Kalas also changed. Of course, they realised that the British arms could no longer be ignored. They had seen how the most powerful Bos like Hla-U, Bo Shwe, and Ôktama had disappeared from the scene one after another. They realised that any further resistance to British authority would be an act of sheer madness. Thus, as the Rangoon Gazette wrote, they

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[26] The Pioneer Mail, 1 January 1891, p.8.

[27] See above, p.298.

[28] SR, Mandalay, 1892-1893 (Rangoon 1894), p.28.

"recognised the utter futility of any attempt to restore any member of the Alompra family to the throne of Burma."[29]

But if the Burmans had good reason for fearing British arms, they had also good reason for appreciating British rule. The British not only gave them security of life and property and a new sense of justice, they also showed them how promptly and generously the Government could respond to the needs of the people. Scarcity was a common phenomenon in Upper Burma, but the Burmese people could not remember a time when their own Government provided relief works, agricultural advances, and famine wages. Occasionally a good king exempted certain villages from the thathameda payment. But this was never on such a large scale as that during the 1891-1892 crisis. Perhaps the King was a little more generous, but his generosity was hardly felt by the people because of the greediness of the local administrators. As we have already seen,[30] King Thibaw had remitted a land tax of 20% on the crops in certain riverine villages, but the Myothugyis continued to collect money on that account. Thus the people did not have any scope to appreciate the generosity of their ruler. But during 1891-1892 they certainly noticed the humanitarian aspect of British rule. This was perhaps the fundamental reason why, in spite of sufficient provocation during the 1891-1892 distress, they remained quiet.

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[29] The Rangoon Gazette Weekly Budget, 3 January 1891, p.9.

[30] See above, p. 269.

Thus Sir Charles Crosthwaite's achievement was solid. But it was costly too - costly in respect of man, money and energy. The war in Upper Burma defied every calculation which the British had made initially. The original Expeditionary Force, consisting of some 10,000 men, was considered to be more than sufficient to extinguish all resistance.[31] But eventually this force was increased to about 35,000 officers and men. Some 8,000 military police were also brought in. The casualties, both from war and disease, totalled about 1,500 a year. The total cost of the five-year pacification was about five million pounds, or more than ten times the original estimate.

The loss on the Burmese side should also be taken into consideration. It is not possible to say how many Burmans were killed and wounded or how much property was destroyed. But it seems that the total Burmese loss was far greater than that of the British. There are good reasons for supposing that. First, the British troops had the advantage of firearms. They had long range heavy guns, quick-firing machine guns, and numerous breech-loaders. Compared with these, the Burmans had a certain quantity of flint locks and long Enfields, their common weapons being das[32] and spears. So in almost every engagement they invariably took more casualties than the British. This is clear from the figures available from the official reports. It is not, however, possible to obtain any

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[31] DP, Reel 516, Dufferin to Queen, No. 27, 18 November 1885.

[32] The Burmese da "is a weapon about three feet long, with a slight uniform curve from end to end. About three-sevenths of this length is helve, the rest blade. The blade is generally about an inch and a quarter wide, with an obtuse point." Yule, A Narrative of the Mission sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855 (London 1858), p.158.

figure for the total Burmese casualties during the past five years, because in numerous cases of engagements the official reports do not give us any figure at all. There may be several explanations for this. Sometimes the rebels carried off the bodies of their dead comrades. Thus, during an engagement in June 1886, Bo Shwe's men were seen carrying off several cart loads of bodies.[33] So it was impossible to know how many rebels were killed and wounded. Even if the bodies were not removed, it was not always possible to count them as they lay scattered in the jungle of tall grass. Thus after an engagement in October 1887 with the Bayingan Prince forty bodies were counted and many more were found lying here and there in the jungle.[34] Again, it seems that some officers did not bother about the figures and completed their reports simply by saying that the enemy was driven off with loss. But the general impression we get from them is that the Burmese loss was always greater than that of the British. The devastating effect of British artillery and machine guns is to be taken into consideration in determining Burmese casualties.

Secondly, the Burmese villagers suffered both at the hands of the rebels and the troops. It was a protracted guerilla war. So every single village was involved. The village which was used as a base by the rebels was severely punished by the troop . The houses were burnt down, the grain destroyed, and the cattle carried off either for meat or for transport.[35] The military papers show that

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[33] MLEI, vol. 999, M 3190, p.6.

[34] Ibid., vol. 971, M 4836, p.2.

[35] Ibid., vol. 961, M 7753, pp. 21, 34, 47.

during the first few months of occupation almost every operation was accompanied by the burning of several villages. The following extract from the report on the Expedition to the Chindwin in January 1886 is worth noting in connection with the burning of villages:

> "The village of Kyoung-toung was reached at7 -48 A.M. and surrounded. Afterwards the force continued its march to Mwegone, which was burnt. The party then returned to Kyoung-toung, which was burnt..... and the return march continued."[36]

This is what happened during almost every operation. A similar punishment was inflicted by the rebels on the village which co-operated with the British. Thus in Myedu and Tabayin alone, some 120 villages were burnt by the rebels or dacoits,[37] while at Myotha alone Rs. 58,000 worth of grain was destroyed in April 1886.[38] The total effect of all these destructions on the economic life of the country was disastrous. Agriculture was especially affected. With the villages and lands abandoned, with the seed-paddy destroyed or looted, and with the cattle carried off by the troops and the rebels or killed by drought and negligence, agriculture was completely ruined.

Thus the total cost of the war, taking both the Burmese and the British losses together, was enormous. So the study of the pacification of Upper Burma raises two practical questions: whether this cost was inevitable and whether it was worthwile. As to the first question, the course of events during the first three years of

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[36] MLEI, vol. 960, M 7198, p.2.

[37] IUBP, vol. Z/P/2035, January 1887 (Public), pp. 78-79.

[38] MLEI, vol. 961, M 7753, p.84.

the occupation of Mandalay shows that a heavy cost was unavoidable. True, during the first year of occupation, the British had made certain blunders. They had failed to formulate a definite policy as to Upper Burma's future, had failed to take adequate precautionary measures on the basis of an incorrect assessment of the nature of Burmese resistance, and had committed certain excesses. These seem to have aggravated the situation with the obvious effect of prolonging the conflict. But the work of pacification itself was of such a difficult nature that it could not have been accomplished without much bloodshed and expense in any case. It was carried out under enormous natural difficulties. The extensive swamps, the dense jungle, the heavy rainfall, and the consequent prevalence of malaria and other diseases not only greatly hampered the movement of troops and police, but also absolutely incapacitated a large number of them for field service. In their anxiety to keep troops and police fit for service the Government had stepped up medical supply during 1886-1887.[39] But,in spite of this, the number of non-combat casualties steadily increased so that in fifteen months of the occupation of Mandalay it totalled about five thousand.[40]

Indeed, these first fifteen months were a difficult period for the British - a period during which they, through mistakes and

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[39] MLEI vol. 982, Review of Military and Marine Stores Expenditure for India for 1886-87, Simla, 1888, p.4.

[40] Ibid., vol. 969, M 5197/1887.

suffering, learnt to cope with the climatic and physical obstacles of Upper Burma. By then the forces of unrest and disorder were deeply rooted. This is why the special military operations undertaken during the cold season of 1886-1887 failed to produce the desired effects.

Apart from the enormous climatic and physical difficulties, the task of pacification should also be viewed in the light of the traditional outstanding feuds between neighbouring villages, intensified in a period of political and administrative chaos; the ordinary dacoity of the old regime, increased by many of Thibaw's disbanded soldiers and stimulated by the corrupt officials, the political movements headed by the Princes of the blood royal and supported by the military and civil officers who had lost their ordinary means of livelihood, the participation of many pongyis in the resistance movement on an individual basis and the inordinate national vanity of the Burmese people. All these go a long way to show that the unrest in Upper Burma "drew its power from instinctive and traditional rootage."[41] Lord Dufferin had clearly realised the gravity of the situation. This is why he wrote:

> "it is much more a question of time than of troops. We cannot put an end to the disturbances with which we are dealing by the mere weight of numbers. The whole army of India could not do that."[42]

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[41] John F. Cady, A History of Modern Burma (Ithaca, New York 1958), p.133.

[42] DP, Reel 517, Memorandum of Lord Dufferin, attached to his letter to Lord Cross, Secretary of State, dated 18 October 1886.

Dufferin was right. The resistance encountered during the first year of occupation had proved far more widespread, and was likely to be much more continuous and obstinate than was originally anticipated. Given the nature of the task the British had set themselves, heavy casualties and expense were inevitable.

As to the question of whether or not the heavy cost of pacification was worthwhile, the British achieved all their ends. The British ascendancy in the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy not only placed Upper Burma's resources at Britain's disposal, but also saved Britain's Eastern Empire from possible future political and economic complications. As we have seen,[43] China regarded Burma as her tributary State. The long protracted war in Upper Burma, resulting in thousands of casualties and enormous expenses on the British side, convinced China that Britain was not prepared to allow her or any other Eastern or Western Power to obtain a hold on the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy. Thus the cost which Britain paid for keeping the Valley for herself seems to have neutralised the traditional Chinese claim to suzerainty over Burma and thereby removed the possibility of any future confrontation with China.

But the most important result was achieved in connection with France. As we have seen,[44] the influence of France was growing

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[43] See above, p. 119.

[44] See above, pp. 24-29.

rapidly at the Court of Mandalay, which might ultimately have resulted in active military intervention by France. This is what the British wanted to prevent at all costs. Indeed, French domination of the Upper Valley of the Irrawaddy would have been a serious menace to the security and prosperity of Britain's Eastern Empire. France would have gained the power to be a constant source of trouble along India's eastern frontier, to ruin Britain's lucrative trade in timber and rubies, and to destroy her chance of opening up trade with South-West China through Bhamo. Thus, by sending an expedition to Upper Burma in time, Britain successfully checkmated French policy and thereby saved her Empire in the east from many future problems.

Thus, so far as the British were concerned, the cost of the five years' war, although heavy, was strategically worthwile. It was also worthwhile for the Burmans in some ways. The establishment of British rule unquestionably brought Upper Burma within the reach of western civilisation. Western education was introduced and with it came new political ideas and new ways of life. Apart from this, the heavy cost[45] imparted to the Burmans the lesson that the nation's will alone was not sufficient to defeat a militarily superior invading army. In fact, the Burmans had felt the superiority of British arms during the First and the Second Anglo-Burmese Wars. So they had tried to improve their position militarily. But their position as it stood before the Third Anglo-Burmese War was

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[45] On the Burmese side.

still far too much below the British standard. This was proved by the quick collapse of Thibaw's army. However, the nationwide resistance which subsequently developed appears to have encouraged the people to such an extent that they ignored the military superiority of the British. The five years' resistance made it absolutely clear to the Burmese people that, however strong their will to fight might be, they were no match for the British or any modern army without proper training, discipline and weapons. This is why the nationalists in the forties of the twentieth century looked to Japan for help.

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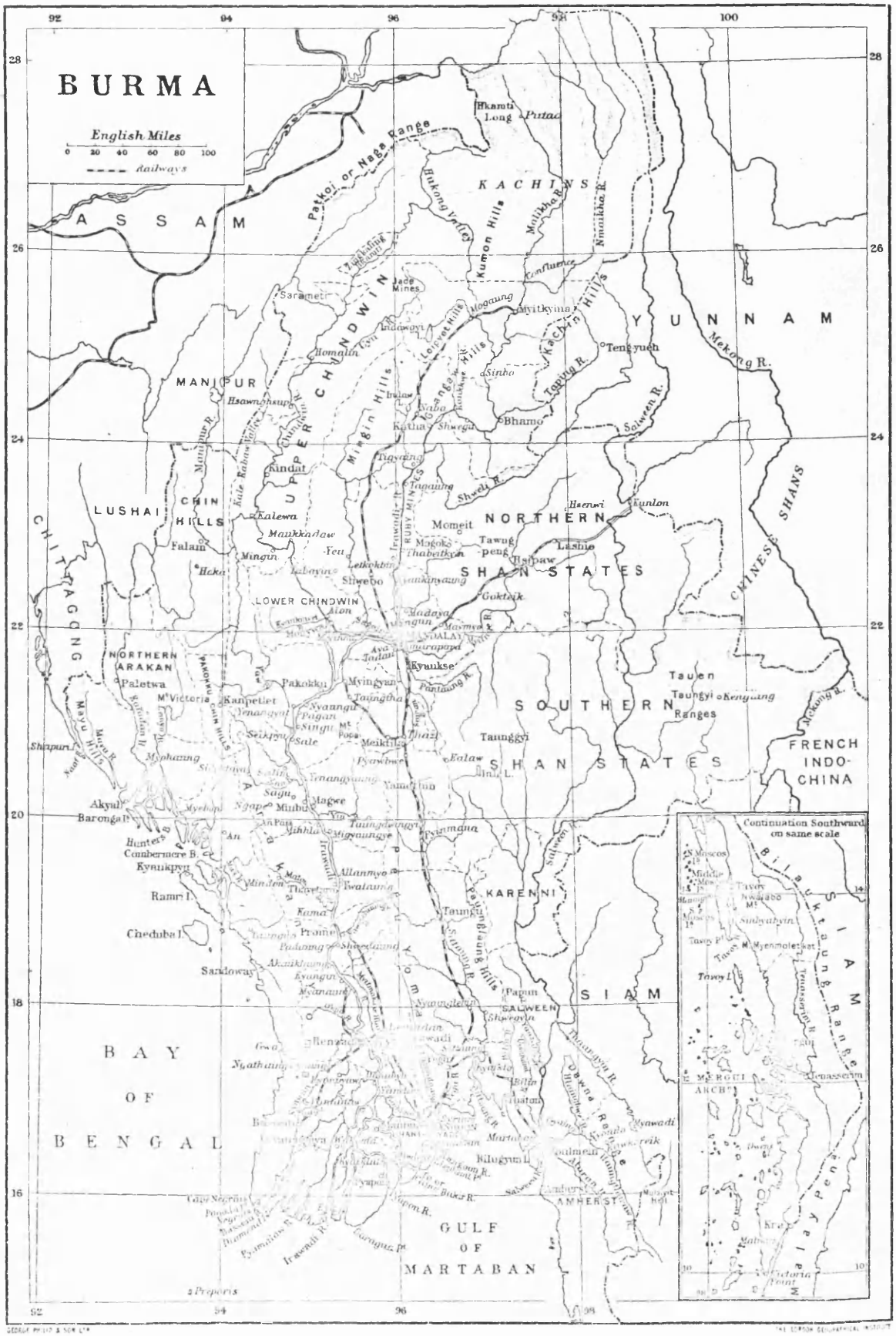

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OF

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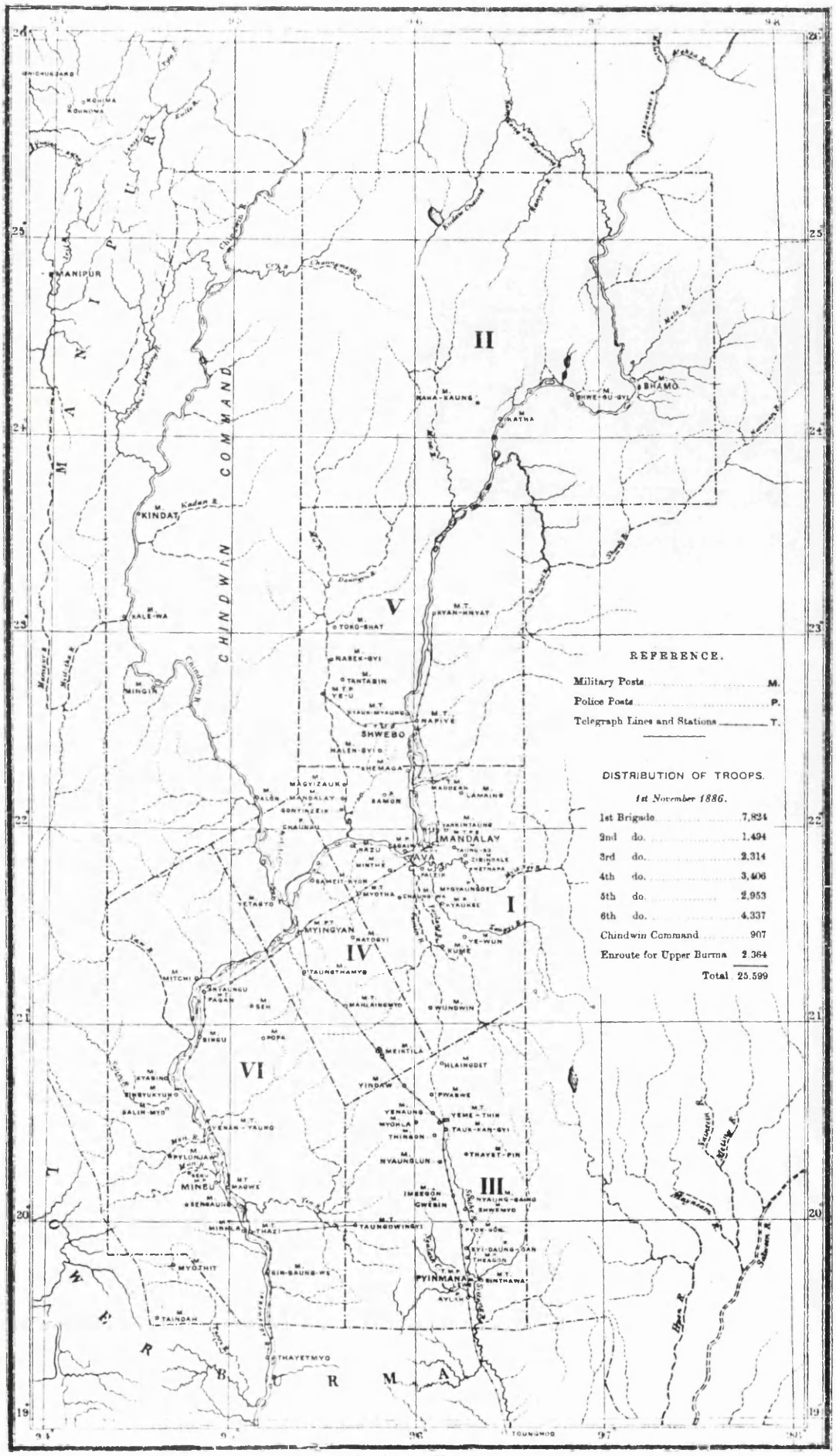

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